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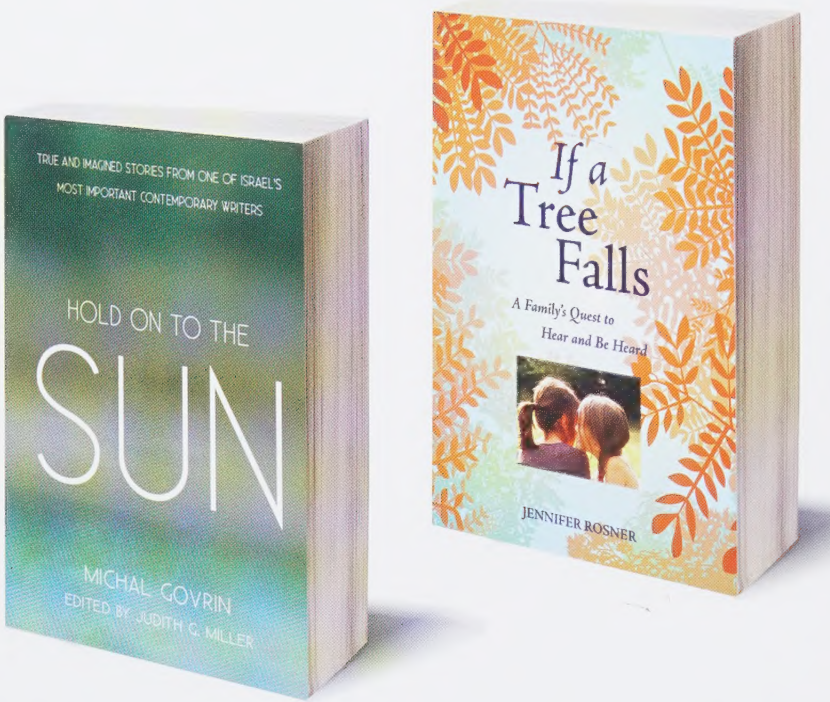
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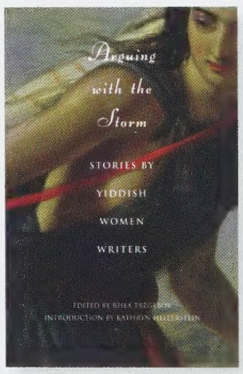

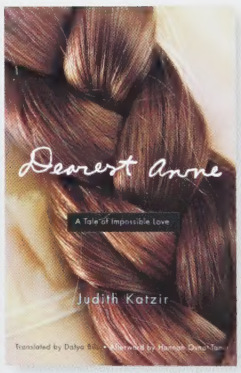

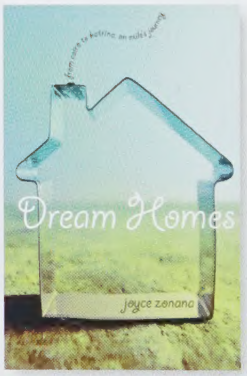

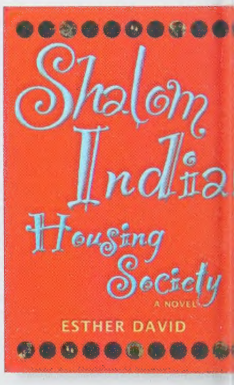

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Lilith

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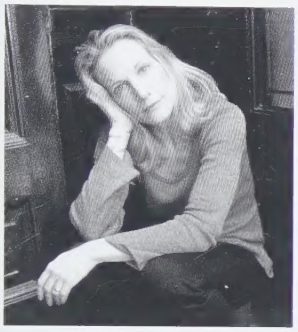

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"Money is the bio-fuel that sustains transformative change."

—Nessa Rapoport

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Growing up, weren't we all supposed to be smart and look good? Or at least appropriate. The being smart part had some flexibility, the looking good not so much. I did my homework, read novels, built furniture, daubed polish on my nails (summer) and had my hair done (winter), wore "appropriate" clothing, first to bar and bat mitzvah parties and later to the cookie-cutter weekly activities at the local JCC. Then, early 1960s, I left Winnipeg for Brandeis, sending ahead my trunk of "appropriate" clothing, with matching shoes, bags and gloves. Uh-oh. Not so appropriate for that guitar-strumming, songs-of-social-protest-singing, Army-Navy-store-turtleneck-wearing cohort. Part of my story of social change can be told through my changing wardrobe.

face of American women. Jewish designers and "garmentos" (a.k.a. people in the schmatte business) are behind the look of the ready-to-wear in our stores. Rounding out the picture, we've got the revolting anti-Semitic rants of uber-designer John Galliano.

On a personal level, clothing tells the outside world, simply, what we think about ourselves that day. Usually this is our choice. In other times, other places, Jewish women had to wear clothing that demonstrated what other people thought of us. What we wore marked us as undesirables. Long before the Nazis' loathed yellow star, there were restrictive clothes imposed by anti-Semitic societies: stiff ruffs around the neck that impeded movement, peculiar hats, unmatched shoes.

Today, it's sometimes argued, Jewish women willingly dress

What our clothes are trying to say about us.

We all have narratives we tell ourselves about clothes, and we want to hear yours. The inherited fur you can't wear and can't part with; the dress from that landmark occasion; your ratty hoodie from summer camp. Tell us, on the Lilith blog (Lilith.org/blog). You know you're not alone.

Here's one story I wouldn't have predicted. I'm sitting in a Lilith salon at a college campus in the Northeast. About 15 Jewish women students on sofas and chairs are nibbling on hummus and pita and chewing over the state of the world. The evening's conversation, which started out about mothers, quickly morphed into something else: what our clothes say about who we are–who we've chosen to be.

A woman in black pants and shirt gives her name, then remarks that she grew up in an ultra-Orthodox community where women dress in very traditional, gender-specific clothing. "When I came to campus and started to wear pants, my mother was really worried, because 'If you're not wearing a skirt, how will people know you're Jewish?'"

All these signifiers! Think of how uneasy we typically feel when we see, as I did last week, a little boy of about four who often wears his sister's clothes—skirts, barrettes, Mary Janes and all. (And why does this register as cause for comment? After all, we don't startle when we see a girl in "boy's" clothes, right?) Every time we put on more than a fig leaf, we perform some aspect of our identity. Do we stand out or conform? Be femme, freethinker, or corporate striver? Daring, or a team player?

Are Jewish women more obsessed with appearance than others? You might think so, from popular culture. Makeup mavens like Estée Lauder and Helena Rubinstein created the to look like part of a group. A ditty about "Coasties"—rich and spoiled Jewish college women—chanted last year on some Midwestern campuses named the precise fashion labels thought to be favored by Jewish women. And the pejorative "JAP" is another way to brand and blame Jewish female consumerism. But Jewish women are taking the rap for all women. Doesn't everyone want to be smart and look good? Yet it's only a Jewish woman who gets labeled "princess," a title indicating not regal power but superficiality and self-absorption.

So, are we self-absorbed? A university student declared to me recently that if she and her suitemates gave up their time-consuming "How do I look?" questions every morning, "We would have made the revolution already."

Is looking good an attempt to cheat the revolution? Kibbutzniks used to think so, and so did Mao. Sartorial conformity is a useful method of controlling individual differences. But as the women's movement has been shaping a multi-issue, pluralistic revolution, one that admits of overalls and also of jeggings and dancing slippers, the women in this issue are reclaiming getting dressed as a pleasure, an art form, an expression of individuality and a comfort. They aren't terribly worried if wearing skirts marks them as having bad values.

Susan Weidman Schneider
Editor in Chief

PHOTO: RACHEL M. SCHNEIDER

VOICES

Traditionally the voice of a Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. These pages are for news about Jewish women in our own strong voices.

Israeli Court Leaves Back Door Open on Segregated Buses

In January, Israel's high court abolished the so-called "black buses," the Egged public buses used by the ultra-Orthodox, men in front, women in back. But Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) director Anat Hoffman feels the decision falls short. She told the Jerusalem Post that, by making segregated seating voluntary, the court literally "left the back door open," allowing women to enter by the bus back door. **"Women who have been bullied into sitting in the back of the bus have been trained to sit there. I want that door closed."** The IRAC plans to test the ruling with "freedom riders."

To view life on the buses before the court decision, see "Black Bus," the 2009 documentary by Israeli filmmaker Anat Zuria, the final film in her trilogy critiquing the ultra-Orthodox Haredi world.

www.Lilith.org / blog

No, This Isn't PMS. You Are Just Really Annoying.

I did an about face this month. I decided to stop believing in PMS. PMS and Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder weren't actually included in the DSM until some time in the 1970s (and against protestations of many psychiatrists). Before that, we have the Victorians, Freud *et al*, to thank for notions of female hysteria and humors. Isn't it possible that what we are dealing with is just straight depression? Real anger? I do find myself occasionally breathless with annoyance, my voice rising an octave or two. But when I think of this as PMS, it is usually just a coincidence, and the thinking, the "noticing," only makes it worse, heightens the sense of crisis. So, I am no longer going to "notice." I will deal with and process my annoyance, rather than sublimating it. And if it gets really bad, I will see a therapist, not a bottle of Evening Primrose Oil.

LIZ LAWLER, on the Lilith blog

Although some women do run for elected office on campus, many choose less visible jobs behind the scenes. And women consistently undersell themselves, sometimes making self-deprecating remarks in situations where men might stress their own accomplishments. "Women are expected to do everything, do it well, and look hot while doing it," said one Princeton alumna.

From a just-released Princeton report on undergraduate women's leadership.

Rabbinic Call to Action

PHOTO OF RABBI JULIE SCHONFELD, COURTESY OF THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY.

In 2004, the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly released a study, "Gender Variation in the Careers of Conservative Rabbis: A Survey of Rabbis Ordained Since 1985." RA Executive VP Rabbi **Julie Schonfeld** told Lilith magazine, "I have called upon other rabbinic organizations to follow the RA's lead and produce a study tracking women's career advancement, as it is known and widely discussed that congruent gaps [in salary and pulpit placement] remain across the denominations. I hope that others will soon heed the call."

Rabbi Schonfeld's call to action comes at a time of firsts for women rabbis. Not only is Rabbi Schonfeld the RA's first female executive VP but the presidents of the rabbinic organizations of all three American branches of Judaism outside the Orthodox world are headed by women: **Gilah Dror** is president of the RA; **Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus** is president of Reform Judaism's Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR); and **Yael Ridberg** is president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA).

Aside from these women at the top, one step in getting the overall numbers on women's career advancement is the Reform movement's new study of rabbis' salaries. According to CCAR Chief Executive Steven A. Fox, the study's first phase, completed in February, compiled data on more than 700 rabbis from the Reform Pension Board.

Analysis will compare men's and women's salaries from entry-level assistant rabbi through senior rabbi. The study's findings are initially being released to CCAR rabbis and Reform congregations.

Fox expects the study will show "in what areas we need to advocate and in what areas we need to educate."

The Reconstructionist movement has achieved a more level playing field with similar salary levels and pulpit positions for both men and women rabbis. Rabbi **Richard Hirsh**, executive director of the RRA, credits this equality largely to the fact that the first Reconstructionist rabbis were ordained at the same time that the women's movement was taking off in the late 1960s.

As for Rabbi Schonfeld's call to action, Hirsh said, "We would welcome an opportunity to consider jointly sponsoring a study across rabbinic associations that would yield valuable information for the entire Jewish community. For example, [Conservative Judaism's] United Synagogue has lost six percent of its congregations in the past decade. These congregations' shul programs are still likely 'Conservatish' but have their hiring attitudes changed?"

Hirsh also suggested including the modern Orthodox seminaries such as Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, founded by Rabbi Avi Weiss in Riverdale, N.Y. Hirsh said, in these schools that are "walking very close to the edge, what's happening with the women they're training?"

Reform Judaism's Fox is also open to working with other branches of Judaism to study how women fare within the rabbinate, saying, "I would certainly be happy to be collaborative."

While Conservative Judaism's Rabbinical Assembly has yet to update its 2004 study, ongoing data does exist on the hiring of Conservative male and female pulpit rabbis. The numbers are not encouraging.

The September 2010 issue of the RA Newsletter reported 47 placements for March through August, the high season for pulpit hiring. Of these, 41 were male and six were female. Of the six women hired as pulpit rabbis, four were fresh out of rabbinical school, hired for entry-level positions. For Conservative rabbis already in the field, 32 men but only 2 women were hired.

AMY STONE

"Anita" in Argentina

Anita, an Argentinean film directed by **Marcos Carnevale**, begins with an everyday ritual that tells us about the loving, caring relationship between Dora (**Norma Aleandro**) and Anita (**Alejandra Manzo**), her daughter born with Down Syndrome.

The Feldmans live above their stationery store in the historically Jewish *Once* district of Buenos Aires. Anita's life is bound by ritual—a meal of hot chocolate with vanilla biscuits her mother prepares to wake her in the morning, the way her mother helps her remove her clothes, how she washes herself in the bath, the lullaby her mother sings to help her sleep. She lives a comfortable and happy existence, but Anita's life is limited even beyond the scope of her disability by her mother's overprotectiveness.

On the morning of July 18th, 1994, Dora leaves to make a quick trip to the AMIA (Jewish Community Center) to cash a subsidy check for Anita's upkeep. She warns her daughter not to climb the ladder to the top shelf, and tells her she'll return when the big hand reaches the number at the top of the clock.

Almost as soon as her mother leaves, Anita climbs the ladder, despite her mother's warning. Like any young person, she's testing her boundaries. As she reaches for the top shelf, a terrorist bomb destroys the AMIA building, shattering buildings, lives, and the very framework of Anita's existence.

Frightened and disoriented, Anita wanders the streets of Buenos Aires, searching for her mother, whom she knows only by the name of *Mami*. In the course of her journey, she encounters an alcoholic photojournalist, a family of Chinese immigrants, and a hard-bitten nurse. They all end up touched by the girl's ability to love openly, without judgment.

For Anita, the journey, although frightening, is one where she discovers her own resilience. The loving rituals she shared with her mother play a large part in her ability to survive when she is on her own.

This beautiful, poignant film resonated with me on many levels, but perhaps because, as the mother of a 17-year-old son with Asperger's Syndrome, I've long struggled with finding the right balance between wanting to protect and support my son while still allowing him to experience the consequences of life.

This film, which opened the 3rd Annual Reelabilities Film Festival (*http://www.reelabilities.org*), was also notable because it's one where a character with special needs is actually played by an actress with the condition. Newcomer Alejandra Manzo did a spectacular job, and I hope her success will open doors for other actors.

Learn more about this film by visiting *www.menemshafilms.com/anita.html*.

SARAH DARER LITTMAN

Our Woman in Kabul

Risa Simon, Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy, fluent in Hebrew and Arabic, is an intelligence officer now serving in Kabul, Afghanistan. She's also, as it happens, a Lilith subscriber. On one of her rare leaves in the States, just before her 39th birthday last month, she visited the Lilith office with her husband. (They met on JDate after he saw a picture of her on top of Mt. Fuji.)

LILITH: How'd a nice Jewish girl from South Florida who went to Hebrew day school end up in the Navy? Are you an adrenaline junkie?

RISA SIMON: *Yes.* From the time I was little I wanted to be a Marine, but I was diagnosed with asthma, so the Marines rejected me. The Navy scooped me right up.

LILITH: What was your life like as a girl?

RS: My family made *aliyah* when I was 12. At Ulpan Akiva in Netanya, I roomed with a Palestinian Arab and a Moroccan Hebrew-speaker. Every seed of my interest in language and the Middle East was born in that period. Then I came back to the U.S. after high school.

LILITH: How is it being Jewish in the countries where you've served?

RS: Because of the sexism my sisters and mother and I experienced in Orthodox services in Israel—asked to leave so there'd be room for more men—I walked away from Jewish identification until I joined the Navy. It took being alone in Masawa, Japan, for me to reaffirm my Jewish roots. Then, in 2004, I had an adult bat mitzvah in Florida, in my Navy full-dress blues, in a ceremony I wrote myself.

I became a lay leader for Camp Victory in Iraq, since there was no permanent Jewish chaplain. The only visiting chaplains were Orthodox. One came in and put up a *mechitza*, running roughshod over everyone else's practice. I'm often in dispute with the Orthodox chaplains; many of them cannot minister effectively to women. The Navy has no gender distinctions, and it infuriates me to be told I cannot count in a minyan!

Another example: there I am in Baghdad, working 14 hours a day, and the engineers say they really want to help by building us a sukkah. They go ahead and build it in all that heat—and an Orthodox rabbi comes along and, rather than thanking the base engineers for a beautiful sukkah, says there is a tree branch hanging over it and they'll have to move the sukkah or cut down the tree. Cut down a tree in Iraq!!! Total lack of touch with reality.

Provocative Textiles

"Domestic arts" was the pejorative term used for centuries. It relegated to the home the creativity of endless generations of women artists excluded from professional and academic training. In 1972, Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro founded Womanhouse, a program at the California Institute of the Arts to nurture women and challenge the stereotypes that had frustrated their efforts to acquire a fine arts education.

A Stitch in Jewish Time: Provocative Textiles, an exhibition of the Hebrew Union College Museum in New York, features 44 artists, 36 of them women, all working in fiber: textiles, stitching, weaving and fabric collage. The legacy of Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago shines through with powerful examples from each of these germinal artists. Schapiro, who incorporates fabric collage in most of her spectacular paintings, coined the eclectic word *femmage* to describe her trademark use of lace, embroideries, brocade and luxurious textiles in her paintings. (Schapiro's term has even made it into the august Oxford English Dictionary.)

TOP: THE BIRTH PROJECT (1980-1985) BY JUDY CHICAGO; GRACIA (2001) BY ESTELLE YARINSKY

The only drawing in this exhibition is of a seated woman stitching the Nazi-mandated yellow star onto a family member's garment. How were these hated badges of persecution actually sewn onto clothing? Judy Chicago compels the viewer to realize that it was the mothers, daughters, sisters of the household who were likely the ones to carry out this heinous project. Soshanna Comet, a survivor of a horrific strafing while hiding in a grain field, allows the viewer to share her memories through an open-loom weaving of the flames of terror burning down. Lisa Rosowsky strikes an elegiac note on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust in a multi-piece installation of silk-screened and other fabrics.

There are powerful themes expressed in this fine art exhibition: social justice, history, memory, interpretation of text and ritual observances. Quilted fabric wall hangings by the collaborative artists Leslie Golomb and Louise Silk address the injustice of slavery and the conundrum of Southern Jewish slave owners during the Civil War. A family is depicted celebrating a traditional Passover seder; in the background, a "house slave" stands in attendance as the family recites "This is the bread of our affliction... we were slaves...." These works ask how people refused to recognize the implicit parallels of the situation.

Helène Aylon, a rigorous feminist, embroiders a memory, a salute to her predecessors, on a challah cover. "Coat of the Agunah," by Andi Arnovitz, is a woman's garment created from hundreds of sewn-together scraps and fragments of marriage contracts, calling attention to the situation of many Orthodox women locked in failed or abusive marriages: the sleeves and hem are sewn shut. Referencing a text from the Talmud, Jacqueline Nicholls, an Orthodox British fiber artist, used British millinery fabric to create a Torah mantle as a corset in the shape of a pregnant woman's torso. The piece is based on a text that poetically describes the fetus as learning Torah from an angel whilst in the womb.

This resonant collection of dramatically wonderful textile pieces may come to a museum near you soon. Watch for it at *www.huc.edu/museums/ny*.

LAURA KRUGER

The crime of rape damages and destroys a person's soul.... Due to the severity of the crime, the punishment must be clear and precise.... The contention that seeing a former president of the country go to jail is too painful to watch is an emotional argument, but it definitely cannot be accepted as an ethical argument."

Tel Aviv District Court judges George Karra, Judith Shevach and Miriam Sokolov, on their decision in March to sentence former President of Israel Moshe Katsav to seven years in jail for rape.

www.Lilith.org / blog

Playing the Clock Game

My grandmother, in an inverse situation from many women today who have no choice but to work, had little choice but to stay at home and raise her children. Her daughters, flush with the feminist revolution, became doctors, marched pretty and proud into boys-club medical schools, and went on to have thriving careers, and children. Ran themselves down, on call at nights, seeing patients all day, juggling schedules, trying to do it all. Some women of my generation are trying to play the clock game. Have a career first, take a break in their mid-30s to start a family (and write a novel), and jump back on the wagon when the kids are in school. Good luck. Or they passionately embrace the one or the other – mother or professional – standing stoically by their decision, and peeking over their shoulders only in the dark, when no one is looking. Or, like me, they play the part-time game, part-time mom, part-time professional, a little of this, a little of that, and not too much of anything.

MAYA BERNSTEIN, on the Lilith blog

Hitler Was Their Matchmaker

A recent gathering in New Jersey honored marriages born out of loss.

Holocaust survivor **Gina Lanceter** was staying in an abandoned synagogue in Poland when she met her husband; she was 16. They married less than three weeks later in Lublin, with 10 people as witnesses as there was no rabbi. "A date was not like it is here. He said 'I like you very much'. I said 'I like you'. So he asked if I wanted to get married. I said okay. We were alone. We wanted someone. I wanted to have children." (Gina has just had her first great-grandchild, the Fourth Generation.)

Toby Fluek met her husband, **Max**, at the hospital where her mother (the only other survivor in the family) was convalescing. Max was working as the kashrut supervisor and led the seder. "I was the youngest one so I opened the door for Elijah. He noticed me....He asked where I was going [when I left Germany]. I said to America. We kept company for three weeks and then he proposed. I didn't know if he liked me or America. I decided to take a chance."

Jean Gluck remembered, "There were 100 people at my wedding and I only knew one: my sister. I was shaking."

SHERRY KIRSCHENBAUM

DEBBIE FRIEDMAN AT THE WEXNER HERITAGE CONCERT, ASPEN, COLORADO 1996. WWW.ZIONOZERI.COM.

The Magic of Debbie Friedman's Voice

The death of **Debbie Friedman** on January 9, at the age of 59, came as a shock to her legions of fans; few knew that the singer-songwriter who modernized Jewish liturgical music had long suffered from a mysterious neurological disease.

Her "*Mi Sheberach*," based on the traditional prayer for healing, came out of her personal need to be healed without being cured. It has gone on to almost single-handedly revive Reform Judaism's use of the prayer, with congregants saying aloud the names of those in need of healing.

Playing her guitar, a lover of liturgy and prayer, Debbie Friedman never learned to read music but produced 20 albums. Modest about her accomplishments, in 1996, "when Debbie was honored by The Covenant Foundation as a teacher, she was profoundly moved," writes board chair **Eli Evans** on the Covenant website. She upended the cantorial tradition, penetrating Reform, Conservative, and even a few modern Orthodox services with her folk-pop religious music. And she got Reform Jews to sing. Even more amazing, in 2007, Reform Judaism's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) hired her to teach at the New York campus of its School of Sacred Music. She was so happy, Evans continues, teaching these cantorial students "about the magic and potential of music in their work."

One strong woman, Friedman in "Miriam's Song" joyously depicts the biblical Miriam leading the women on their timbrels after the Red Sea parts.

As Lilith blogger **Emma Gray** put it: "Debbie Friedman's music managed to call Jewish women to action; to remind us that we could and should take ownership over our religious identities."

Friedman preferred to keep her identity as a lesbian private, not wanting it to distract from her music.

A few weeks after her death, the memorial celebration for Debbie Friedman in the Moorish splendor of Manhattan's Central Synagogue was probably the way she would have liked it—participatory. A giant screen displayed the words of her songs and the crowd of well over a thousand sang, wholeheartedly. People remembered her with love and humor. One long-time friend recounted how she would say, "I can't believe I'm Debbie Friedman."

When HUC-JIR President **Rabbi David Ellenson** made the stunning announcement that the School of Sacred Music was being renamed the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, one of the speakers appreciatively responded, "Debbie's probably looking down and laughing."

AMY STONE

On the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Fire, a classic Trina Robbins graphic rendering. Online exclusive: visit Lilith.org for the full story.

THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST CO. OCCUPIED THE 8TH, 9TH AND 10TH FLOORS OF THE ASCH BLDG., ON GREENE ST. AND WASHINGTON PL., WHERE NEW YORK UNIVERSITY NOW STANDS. IN 1909 THE BUILDING HAD BEEN INSPECTED AND FIRE HAZARDS NOTED, AMONG THEM NOT ENOUGH STAIRCASES, AND A FIRE ESCAPE THAT ENDED AT THE SECOND FLOOR.
NO CHANGES WERE MADE. A YEAR LATER, THE FIRE DEPARTMENT INSPECTED THE BUILDING AND FOUND IT IN GOOD CONDITION. IT WAS DECLARED FIREPROOF.
4:45 P.M., SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1911, ON THE 8TH FLOOR OF THE ASCH BUILDING. A WORKER NOTICED SMOKE COMING FROM A RAG BIN.
MR. BERNSTEIN! FIRE!
THE DOOR WAS LOCKED. AFTER MUCH SCREAMING, SOMEONE GOT IT OPEN— INWARDLY— AND IN PANIC AND CONFUSION THE WORKERS STUMBLED DOWNSTAIRS TO SAFETY.
¡COUGH! AIR!
HELP! IT'S AN INFERNO INSIDE!
HAND IN HAND THEY JUMPED, THEIR CLOTHING ABLAZE, THEIR HAIR STREAMING UP IN FLAMES.
THEIR COMBINED WEIGHT TORE THROUGH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT NETS. WITHIN MINUTES THE STREET WAS COVERED WITH BODIES.
MOTHER OF GOD! THE NETS ARE USELESS!
EXCERPT FROM A SPEECH BY ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN AT A MASS MEETING HELD ON MAY 2, 1911, TO PROTEST THE FACTORY CONDITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAGEDY:
I WOULD BE A TRAITOR TO THESE POOR BURNED BODIES, IF I CAME HERE TO TALK GOOD FELLOWSHIP... THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME GIRLS HAVE BEEN BURNED ALIVE IN THE CITY. EVERY WEEK I MUST LEARN OF THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF ONE OF MY SISTER WORKERS. EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF US ARE MAIMED... TOO MUCH BLOOD HAS BEEN SPILLED. I KNOW FROM MY EXPERIENCE THAT IT IS UP TO THE WORKING PEOPLE TO SAVE THEMSELVES. THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN SAVE THEMSELVES IS BY A STRONG WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT!
© TRINA ROBBINS, 1973

The legacy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, on March 25, 1911, has resonated powerfully for 100 years. **David Dubinsky**, President of The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, said in 1961: "These were our martyrs because what we couldn't accomplish by reasoning with the bosses, by pleading with the bosses, by arguing with the bosses, they accomplished with their deaths."

To lessen signs and symptoms of moderate to severe Crohn's Disease in adults not helped enough by usual treatments

Important Safety Information About CIMZIA® (certolizumab pegol)

What is the most important information I should know about CIMZIA?

CIMZIA is a prescription medicine that affects your immune system. CIMZIA can lower the ability of the immune system to fight infections. Serious infections have happened in patients taking CIMZIA, including tuberculosis (TB) and infections caused by viruses, fungi, or bacteria that have spread throughout the body. Some patients have died from these infections. Your doctor should test you for TB before starting CIMZIA. Your doctor should monitor you closely for signs and symptoms of TB during your treatment with CIMZIA.

Certain Types of Cancer

There have been cases of unusual cancers in children and teenage patients using TNF-blocking agents. CIMZIA is not approved for use in pediatric patients. For people taking TNF-blocker medicines, including CIMZIA, the chances for getting lymphoma or other cancers may increase. People with RA, especially more serious RA, may have a higher chance for getting a kind of cancer called lymphoma.

Before starting CIMZIA, tell your doctor if you

- Think you have an infection. You should not start taking CIMZIA if you have any kind of infection, are being treated for an infection or have signs of an infection such as fever, cough or flu-like symptoms or if you get a lot of infections or have infections that keep coming back.
- Have any open cuts or sores
- Have diabetes or HIV
- Have TB, or have been in close contact with someone with TB
- Were born in, lived in, or traveled to countries where there is more risk of getting TB. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.
- Live or lived in certain parts of country (such as the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys) where there is an increased risk for getting certain kinds of fungal infections (histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis, blastomycosis). These infections may develop or become severe if you take CIMZIA. If you do not know if you have lived in these types of areas, ask your doctor.
- Have or have had hepatitis B
- Have or have had any type of cancer
- Have congestive heart failure
- Have seizures, any numbness or tingling, or a disease that affects your nervous system such as multiple sclerosis
- Are scheduled to receive a vaccine. Do not receive a live vaccine while taking CIMZIA
- Are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. CIMZIA has not been studied in pregnant or nursing women.
- Especially tell your doctor if you take: Kineret® (anakinra), Orencia® (abatacept), Rituxan® (rituximab), Tysabri® (natalizumab), or another TNF blocker. You have a higher chance for serious infections when taking CIMZIA with these medicines. You should not take CIMZIA while you take one of these medicines.

After starting CIMZIA, if you get an infection, any sign of an infection including a fever, cough, flu-like symptoms, or have open cuts or sores on your body, call your doctor right away. CIMZIA can make you more likely to get infections or make any infection that you may have worse.

What are the possible side effects of CIMZIA? CIMZIA can cause serious side effects including:

Heart Failure including new heart failure or worsening of heart failure you already have; **Nervous System Problems** such as Multiple Sclerosis, seizures, or inflammation of the nerves of the eyes; **Allergic Reactions**. Signs of an allergic reaction include a skin rash, swollen face, or trouble breathing; **Hepatitis B virus reactivation in patients who carry the virus in their blood.** In some cases, patients have died as a result of hepatitis B virus being reactivated. Your doctor should monitor you carefully during treatment with CIMZIA if you carry the hepatitis B virus in your blood; **Blood Problems**. Your body may not make enough of the blood cells that help fight infections or help stop bleeding; **Immune reactions including a lupus-like syndrome**. Symptoms include shortness of breath, joint pain, or a rash on the cheeks or arms that worsens with sun exposure.

Call your doctor right away if you develop any of the above side effects or symptoms.

The most common side effects of CIMZIA are: upper respiratory infections (flu, cold), rash, and urinary tract infections (bladder infections).

Other side effects have happened in some people including new psoriasis or worsening of psoriasis you already have and injection site reactions.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects to FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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Please see Brief Summary on following pages.

CCD224-1210F

Cimzia. Lasting Crohn's symptom relief I trust.

In clinical trials, Cimzia was shown to reduce or help stop many moderate to severe Crohn's symptoms, such as stomach pain and diarrhea, and to improve general well-being within a few short weeks in some patients. • The majority of patients who continued to take CIMZIA experienced sustained relief beyond 4 years with no increase in dose. • CIMZIA is a non-steroidal prescription treatment that can be injected at home or at your doctor's office every 4 weeks after initial dosing. • Results may vary.

Ask your doctor about the benefits and risks of CIMZIA.

Please read Important Safety Information on the adjacent page

cimzia®
(certolizumab pegol)

Visit cimzia.com/CD
Call 1-877-55CIMZIA

Consumer Brief Summary for Cimzia® (certolizumab pegol)

CONSULT PACKAGE INSERT FOR FULL PRESCRIBING INFORMATION.

Read the Medication Guide that comes with CIMZIA before you start using it, and before each injection of CIMZIA. This brief summary does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about CIMZIA?

CIMZIA is a medicine that affects your immune system. CIMZIA can lower the ability of the immune system to fight infections. Serious infections have happened in patients taking CIMZIA. These infections include tuberculosis (TB) and infections caused by viruses, fungi or bacteria that have spread throughout the body. Some patients have died from these infections.

- Your doctor should test you for TB before starting CIMZIA.
- Your doctor should monitor you closely for signs and symptoms of TB during treatment with CIMZIA.

Before starting CIMZIA, tell your doctor if you:

- think you have an infection. You should not start taking CIMZIA if you have any kind of infection.
- are being treated for an infection
- have signs of an infection, such as a fever, cough, flu-like symptoms
- have any open cuts or sores on your body
- get a lot of infections or have infections that keep coming back
- have diabetes
- have HIV
- have tuberculosis (TB), or have been in close contact with someone with TB
- were born in, lived in, or traveled to countries where there is more risk for getting TB. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.
- live or have lived in certain parts of the country (such as the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys) where there is an increased risk for getting certain kinds of fungal infections (histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis, or blastomycosis). These infections may develop or become more severe if you take CIMZIA. If you do not know if you have lived in an area where histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis, or blastomycosis is common, ask your doctor.
- have or have had hepatitis B
- use the medicine Kineret® (anakinra), Orencia® (abatacept), Rituxan® (rituximab), or Tysabri® (natalizumab)

After starting CIMZIA, if you get an infection, any sign of an infection including a fever, cough, flu-like symptoms, or have open cuts or sores on your body, call your doctor right away. CIMZIA can make you more likely to get infections or make any infection that you may have worse.

Certain types of Cancer

- There have been cases of unusual cancers in children and teenage patients using TNF-blocking agents.
- For people taking TNF-blocker medicines, including CIMZIA, the chances of getting lymphoma or other cancers may increase.
- People with RA, especially more serious RA, may have a higher chance of getting a kind of cancer called lymphoma.

See the section "What are the possible side effects of CIMZIA?" for more information.

What is CIMZIA?

CIMZIA is a medicine called a Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) blocker. CIMZIA is used in adult patients to:

- Lessen the signs and symptoms of moderately to severely active Crohn's disease (CD) in adults who have not been helped enough by usual treatments.
- Treat moderately to severely active rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

It is not known whether CIMZIA is safe and effective in children.

What should I tell my doctor before starting treatment with CIMZIA?

CIMZIA may not be right for you. Before starting CIMZIA, tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- **have an infection**. (See, "What is the most important information I should know about CIMZIA?")
- **have or have had any type of cancer**
- **have congestive heart failure**
- **have seizures, any numbness or tingling, or a disease that affects your nervous system such as multiple sclerosis**
- **are scheduled to receive a vaccine**. Do not receive a live vaccine while taking CIMZIA.
- **are allergic to any of the ingredients in CIMZIA**. See the end of this Brief Summary for a list of the ingredients in CIMZIA.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. CIMZIA has not been studied in pregnant or nursing women.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. Your doctor will tell you if it is okay to take your other medicines while taking CIMZIA. Especially, tell your doctor if you take:

- Kineret® (anakinra), Orencia® (abatacept), Rituxan® (rituximab),Tysabri® (natalizumab). You have a high chance for serious infections when taking CIMZIA with Kineret®, Orencia®, Rituxan®, or Tysabri®.
- A TNF blocker: Remicade® (infliximab), Humira® (adalimumab), Enbrel® (etanercept), Simponi® (golimumab).

You should not take CIMZIA, while you take one of these medicines.

How should I use CIMZIA?

- If your doctor prescribes the CIMZIA lyophilized pack for reconstitution, CIMZIA should be injected by a healthcare provider.
- If your doctor prescribes the CIMZIA prefilled syringe, see the section **"Patient Instructions for Use"** at the end of the Medication Guide for complete instructions for use. Do not give yourself an injection of CIMZIA unless you have been shown by your doctor or nurse.
- CIMZIA is given by an injection under the skin, into your abdomen or thigh area. Your doctor will tell you how much CIMZIA to inject and how often to inject CIMZIA, based on your condition to be treated. Do not use more CIMZIA or inject more often than prescribed.

What are the possible side effects of CIMZIA?

CIMZIA can cause serious side effects including:

See **"What is the most important information I should know about CIMZIA?"**

- **Heart Failure** including new heart failure or worsening of heart failure you already have. Symptoms include shortness of breath, swelling of your ankles or feet, or sudden weight gain.
- **Nervous System Problems** such as multiple sclerosis, seizures, or inflammation of the nerves of the eyes. Symptoms include dizziness, numbness or tingling problems with your vision, and weakness in your arms or legs.
- **Allergic Reactions**. Signs of an allergic reaction include a skin rash, swelling of the face, tongue, lips, or throat, or trouble breathing.
- **Hepatitis B virus reactivation in patients who carry the virus in their blood**. In some cases patients have died as a result of hepatitis B virus being reactivated. Your doctor should monitor you carefully during treatment with CIMZIA if you carry the hepatitis B virus in your blood. Tell your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:
  - feel unwell
  - tiredness (fatigue)
  - poor appetite
  - fever, skin rash, or joint pain
- **Blood Problems**. Your body may not make enough of the blood cells that help fight infections or help stop bleeding. Symptoms include a fever that doesn't go away, bruising or bleeding very easily, or looking very pale.
- **Immune reactions including a lupus-like syndrome**. Symptoms include shortness of breath, joint pain, or a rash on the cheeks or arms that worsens with sun exposure.

Call your doctor right away if you develop any of the above side effects or symptoms.

The most common side effects in people taking CIMZIA are:

- upper respiratory infections (flu, cold)
- rash
- urinary tract infections (bladder infections)

Other side effects with CIMZIA include:

- **Psoriasis**. Some people using CIMZIA had new psoriasis or worsening of psoriasis they already had. Tell your doctor if you develop red scaly patches or raised bumps that are filled with pus. Your doctor may decide to stop your treatment with CIMZIA.
- **Injection site reactions**. Redness, rash, swelling, itching or bruising can happen in some people. These symptoms will usually go away within a few days. If you have pain, redness, or swelling around the injection site that doesn't go away within a few days or gets worse, call your doctor right away.

Tell your doctor about any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

These are not all of the side effects with CIMZIA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

General information about CIMZIA

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes that are not mentioned in Medication Guides. Do not use CIMZIA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give CIMZIA to other people, even if they have the same condition. It may harm them.

This brief summary summarizes the most important information about CIMZIA. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about CIMZIA that is written for health professionals.

For more information go to www.CIMZIA.com or call 1-866-4CIMZIA (424-6942).

Always keep CIMZIA, injection supplies, puncture-proof container, and all other medicines out of the reach of children.

What are the ingredients in CIMZIA?

CIMZIA lyophilized powder: Active ingredient: certolizumab pegol. Inactive ingredients: sucrose, lactic acid, polysorbate. The pack contains Water for Injection, for reconstitution of the lyophilized powder. CIMZIA prefilled syringe: Active ingredient: certolizumab pegol. Inactive ingredients: sodium acetate, sodium chloride, and Water for Injection. CIMZIA has no preservatives.

Product developed and manufactured for:
UCB, Inc., 1950 Lake Park Drive, Smyrna, GA 30080

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CCD123-1210 5E

Lasting Crohn's relief
can be simple

1

Ask your doctor about CIMZIA. It can be injected at home or in your doctor's office – one dose every 4 weeks after initial dosing.

2

Pre-filled syringe designed for comfort and control in partnership with OXO

3

Insured or uninsured, you may qualify for a full year of savings. Ask about our CIMpay® Instant Savings card.* Go to Cimzia.com/CD

lessen signs and symptoms of moderate to severe Crohn's disease in adults not helped enough by usual treatments.

erious infections have happened in patients taking CIMZIA, including tuberculosis (TB) and infections caused by viruses, fungi, or bacteria.

*Subject to eligibility. Restrictions may apply

cimzia®
(certolizumab pegol)

lease see Brief Summary on previous page.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES

In Brooklyn there is a rabbi who will study with you.
His office is lined with books, floor to ceiling and
Wall to wall, hieroglyphics on the spines, a scrim of
Dust motes shimmering in the gloom.

"Cut to the chase," you say. "Give me the law."
So he gives you the law. Six-hundred and thirteen
Of them, and a bunch of other stuff,
Serious and silly all at the same time. And yet
You are surprised to find that
You do not have to try not to laugh.

Bells and pomegranates, alternating,
Line the hem of the Priestly garment.
You picture Christmas bells jingling and
Pithy red pomegranates dragging
Down the tunic, knocking against
The Priest's angles, irksome, like
A litter of kittens at his feet,
And the weight of the whole thing
Pulls down his shoulders,
Causes him to stoop, and his back aches with
The discomfort sometimes felt by
Large-breasted women,
As he strides through the Temple.

You are a photographer, and the
Weight you feel is of the camera
Around your neck, and the thing that makes
You stoop is the pull of that vacant lot,
Where it was decided
That nothing was better than something,
If that something was a synagogue.

In Brooklyn there is a rabbi who will study with you.
All he wants to do is teach and talk and argue.
That's all he does and you can hardly believe it,
When it is Spring and there is so much of the world.

ROBIN WINNING

"YELLOW BAUHAUS" BY SALI ARIEL, WWW.SALIARIEL.COM

City of Refuge

FICTION BY MIRYAM SIVAN

They had no idea that of all the cities in the world, it would be theirs, the first Jewish city founded since ancient Israel fell to Rome, which would produce the largest number of buildings according to Bauhaus principles. No other city at that exact moment in history replicated the condition of being so prolifically built while numerous practitioners schooled in 'the building of the future' were in abundance, in residence, and otherwise unemployed.

Though I was born in this city, I wasn't raised here. My parents decided to try their fortune in a larger metropolis, and instead of Bauhaus in the neighborhood, I spent my childhood staring up at the heavy walls of Manhattan's tall buildings. But I returned after high school, and six months after I completed my army service, my grandmother died, followed soon after by my grandfather. I moved in, loyal and content, to their apartment on Arnon Street.

At that time, in the mid 80s, there were fewer hotels on the beachfront and the sea was seen and smelled from the balconies. And this is where I remain, 15 years later, married with a child on the way, wondering how my grandparents, my father, his two brothers, and a long string of stray dogs, managed to live in these strangely distributed 40 meters.

Dan, my husband, insists that we (which means I) start looking for a new place to live. But I don't. I love this apartment and I want to raise my little one here amidst the monolithic pieces of dark furniture which are all that remain from my grandparents' life in Berlin. I want her to read Leah Goldberg's books about the children of Arnon Street, suspecting that my father Abe was among the characters.

"But Dori," Dan takes my hand in his, tracing the lines of my palm with his paint- and nicotine-stained finger, "we need more space and more light. The baby will learn about Abe from you. He doesn't need to live in this ruin."

And when I don't answer, resisting his attempt to wrest me from my birthright, Jacob I call him to his face but with the volume off, he ups the ante and tempts me with creature comforts and the promise of his attention.

"We'll get one of those old places near Jaffa and renovate it, a loft like in New York. My studio will be there and that will make it easier for you when the baby comes. I'll be home all the time."

The mess of pottage smells better with each conversation. But then it only takes a seven A.M. walk down the narrow path between my building and the yard next door, to Biterman's at number 17, to strengthen my resolve not to move anywhere.

BITERMAN'S MARKET HAS NOT CHANGED in the 35 years I've known it. Summer mornings I'd run over barefoot to buy fresh rolls and white cheese. For a child from Manhattan, bare feet and warm rolls were a sample piece of heaven. Set back from the building front, Biterman's was, and remains, dim and airless. A couple of weak electric bulbs barely help. Any natural light is screened by trees in the yard that have grown sentinel over the decades. The market's shadows are saturated with smells—fresh bread, cheese, and cookies that continue to talk to me.

While Biterman would assemble the few items on my grandmother's list, and wrote down the day's purchases on the family's index card, the definition of a credit card in those days, I would loiter near the cookie tins. Sometimes Mrs. Biterman came out from behind the counter, lifted a milky plastic cover and gave me one with a thick chocolate stripe down the middle. Biterman's eyes would flick up, catch the transaction, and then flick down again to focus on the numbers being scratched out beneath his pencil stub.

They died when I was in high school and their son sold the shop to Yankelovich, a recent immigrant from Russia, an enormous man who looks like an ex-body builder. He smiles a lot, showing off a couple of gold caps, and has changed absolutely nothing in the old store. The refrigerator with the steel framed glass doors is in the back. The cookie boxes with milky plastic covers are in the front. Wooden shelves for daily delivered breads and rolls are in the middle by the small counter. Even the faded Biterman sign still hangs none too securely over the narrow metal entrance.

With my huge stomach I cannot run over but I continue to walk down the three flights of stairs of my building every morning, loping along 15's narrow path and crossing over the lopsided fence into 17's equally narrow one, and stepping down into the shop to buy milk and fresh rolls. Students on their way to high school sign their parents' cards for the sandwiches and bags of chocolate milk they will eat during the 10 o'clock break. The index as credit card lives on in this neighborhood.

"We'll get one of those old places near Jaffa and renovate it, a loft like in New York."

I am in love, I suppose, with the old ficus whose roots have shifted the path's pavers. And ever since my stomach has announced to all the neighbors that Stein's granddaughter is having a baby, Yankelovich always spoils me with a cookie or two. I cannot give this up, and Dan's promises of proximity-equals-involvement are basically a lie. Not that he doesn't want this to be true. In his mind when he hears the baby cry he will quickly wipe and set down the brush. He will clean his hands on his pants and come over to the crib, lift the child and hold her against his chest until the sobbing is soothed. When he lays her down again she will sleep the day away. Gracefully, romantically, Dan will return to his studio to work the painting with the renewed vigor of knowing he is someone's father.

That the baby needs changing, feeding, consoling, entertaining, the outdoors, does not occur to him. That caring for a baby requires an investment of time, huge blocks of it, and that one cannot simply return to work in between burping, is not a fact known to him. As of course it is to me. Most of my friends are mothers already and I've seen their lives turn upside down.

What Dan also doesn't realize is how I will no longer be available to him, as I have been for five years of marriage. And what I have come to realize is how much I need this baby to stake out what I will allow him to take from me and what I cannot now give because of her, but really because of me. I've tried and failed to get across to Dan that he must stop expecting and demanding that I care for him so much. That sometimes I also need tending.

Like this morning. I am on the Number Four bus coming back from the Carmel Market, the shuk. It's been a few years

since the bombs went off regularly on Tel Aviv's streets and buses. Anyway, I'm a fatalist. Either the bomb has my name on it, or it doesn't. I'm not afraid. Of Dan, maybe; of bombs, no. Go figure. Usually I walk home from the market, a slow journey of looking into old shops and especially into the new on Ben Yehuda Street. I have a pit-stop at the konditorei on the corner of Frishman: a short espresso and a cremetörtchen. But now, eight months pregnant, I simply cannot manage a half-hour walk carrying heavy bags of produce. I have no choice but to take the bus.

For the longest time, even before the pregnancy, Dan has insisted I stop shopping in the shuk. He prefers one of the fancy new supermarkets near the house. It will take less time, he says, it's less distracting. But the new markets' fluorescent lights and steel shelves are sterile and predictable. And the produce is not nearly as fresh.

"You're living in an Israel that doesn't exist anymore." He is exasperated by my stubbornness. "Holding on to the 70s and the little girl who went to the shuk with her grandmother. Thank god you're a vegetarian or you'd be in the chicken stalls blowing at asshole feathers."

"Are all the other thousands of people who shop there everyday also nostalgic or just looking for quality?" I ask, thinking I should have never told Dan about how I would go with my grandmother to the back streets of the shuk to choose a chicken for lunch. She would stick her hand in the cage and lift up one chicken at a time, inspecting its small helpless body, blowing feathers away from the asshole to check for fat and health. When she was satisfied with one, she handed it over to the butcher whose long gray beard and smock were flecked with splattered blood, a carnivorous Spin Art. Finding refuge behind a wooden column holding up a loose dirty awning, I watched as the butcher laid the chicken on a wood block and pressed its neck down flat. Thwack he chopped off its head and handed my grandmother the still twitching body. On our way home I would quietly inform my grandmother that come lunch time, I wanted only salad. She said I was being ridiculous. What did I think happened to the animals before they showed up for sale in plastic wrap in the New York supermarkets I went to with my mother?

It is 11 in the morning on bus Number Four. I lean my head against the window and watch the traffic. Lots of people are walking, lots of people are talking. Lots of cars, taxis, bicycles, strollers, dogs, vendors, tourists, pensioners, lots of mothers with young children. Action, all that street action I'm missing out on riding inside this whale of a bus making its way slowly north on Ben Yehuda.

The driver raises the volume of the bus radio and a psychologist responds to a caller's question about women who slide into the role of social worker in their love relationships. "If you find yourself listening to his pain and his woes," the psychologist says, "if this becomes the main topic of your conversations, if you try, as you will for you love the man, to make it okay for him, if he comes to assume that this is the role you play in his life, then, woman, run for the hills!" and she chuckles, while sounding serious. I look around to see if the other passengers are listening. Most are quiet, watching the street through the windows. What assuredness, what bravado, I belittle the radio psychologist in my mind, but of course for her this is just a story, a situation, a scene—for me it's my life.

The air-conditioned glass of the bus is cool against my face and the bags of produce lean heavily against my legs. My eyes pass over the small jewelry and notions shops, the tourist stops and kiosks, while my ears reluctantly take in the ongoing string of pearly wisdom coming over the radio waves. I reject out of hand the pathetic simplicity, the pedestrian quality of her words, but I also know there is something to what she is saying. Beneath the bravado and the commonplace, I know she knows.

It seems to me that even the vendors in the shuk know. Not in the sense that I'm "hearing things"— newspaper headlines with double entendres, traffic signals with secret pulses in between the red, the yellow and the green, traffic itself an ongoing sign. What I mean is that I am slowly able to accept an image of myself that

"PIONEER" BY SALI ARIEL, WWW.SALIARIEL.COM

The radio psychologist responds to a caller's question: "If you find yourself listening to his pain and his woes, if he comes to assume that this is the role you play in his life, run for the hills!"

the world beat me to. My system senses that I am in trouble, that Dan and this marriage are threatening to make me invisible, in the way that Ellison meant: keep this Jewish bitch running.

BECAUSE THE SHUK WASN'T CROWDED THIS MORNING, I was able to take more time and not guard my stomach from the push, and it's always an intense push, of an Israeli crowd. Vendors belted out their sing-song advertisements: "Come lady, look at my fruit, it's better than any other in the world." "For you a special price. Come see for yourself." The usual market hooks. When one man over his mound of cucumbers and tomatoes noticed my stomach he sang, "What a shame such a pretty woman is left to do the work alone," and he dispatched a teenager to take the heavy bags off my hands while I wound my way to the end of the shuk and back to the bus stop.

"Your husband working?" the boy parked my purchases at the stop and reluctantly took a tip.

"Of course," I smiled.

The vendors know, the boy carrying my packages knows, the radio psychologist knows, my cousin Orli knows, Yankelovich knows. And there are more.

I wait to pass the Mondrian fruit store just past Frishman before ringing the bus bell. My stop approaches. Carefully I navigate my way towards the front. I permit an octogenarian waiting curbside to take my packages graciously as I slowly make my way down the steep stairs. I think of Dan working long hours in his studio, of the many appointments he makes for himself when he is not working: gallery owners, writers, painters, friends, masseuse, workouts at the gym. Time for so much, but not for carrying packages home from the market.

"You can manage?" the old man asks me.

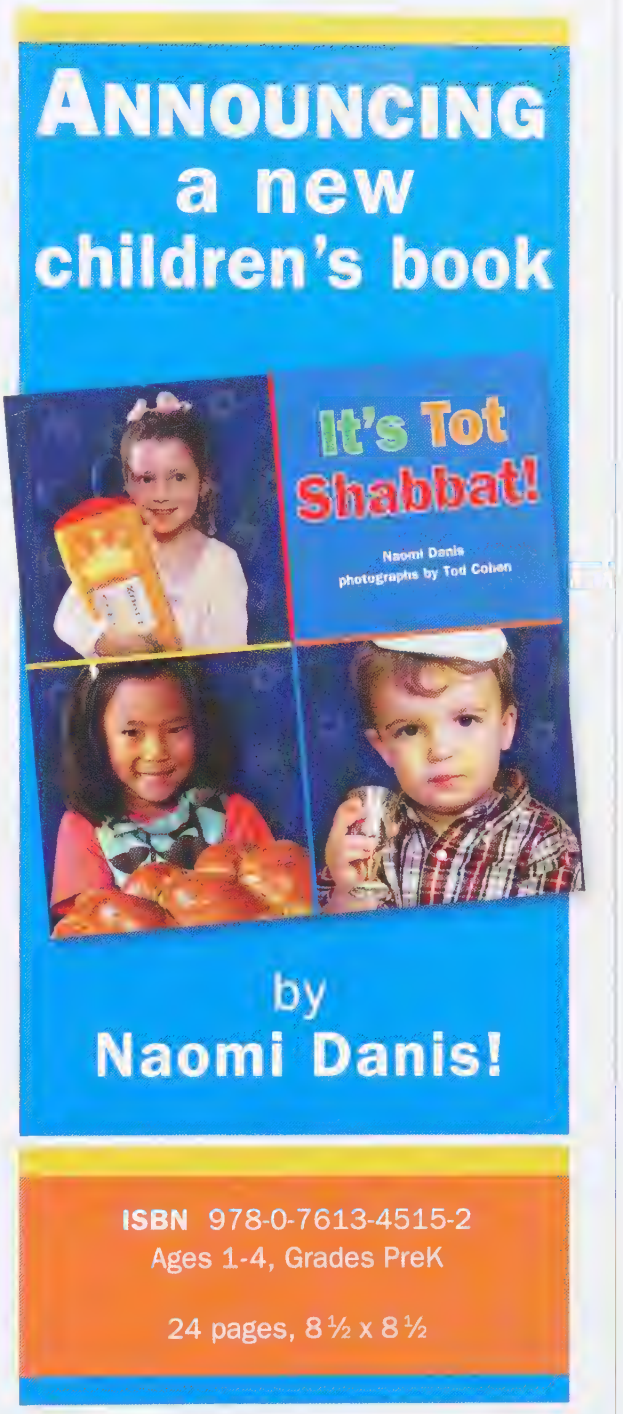
"Yes, thank you," I smile sweetly at him. He stands tall after his gentlemanly deed. And he knows.

It is very hot so I walk down the street slowly, barely able to carry the heavy bags, and collapse on a bench to call Dan. Typically he doesn't answer and my call is transferred to voice mail. I don't leave a message, and call my cousin Orli in Ramot. She recently left Tel Aviv and moved to the Galilee to be with a man who, she says, is strong enough to be gentle.

"Go to the station and get on the first bus north," she instructs me.

And I think I'll do it, and I won't tell Dan. Until then he can look for me in the ancient city of refuge, he can look it up in the Bible, locate it on a map, paint it on a canvas if that's what it takes to grab his fucking attention, to stake out a little bit of property in his brain. I stand to catch a cab and can already see a cluster of small one-storey homes there, surrounded by wild gardens and trees. There are children, too, playing by the water's edge, throwing stones for dogs to retrieve, tracing pictures on my stomach for the baby. I'll be safe there, among the bits and pieces of farm life, in a place where husbands can for once feel the absence of their wives, and wives can feel the boundaries which both protect and divide them. ■

Miryam Sivan has been living in the Galilee in Israel for 16 years. She teaches literature and writing at the University of Haifa and has just completed a novel, Make it Concrete.



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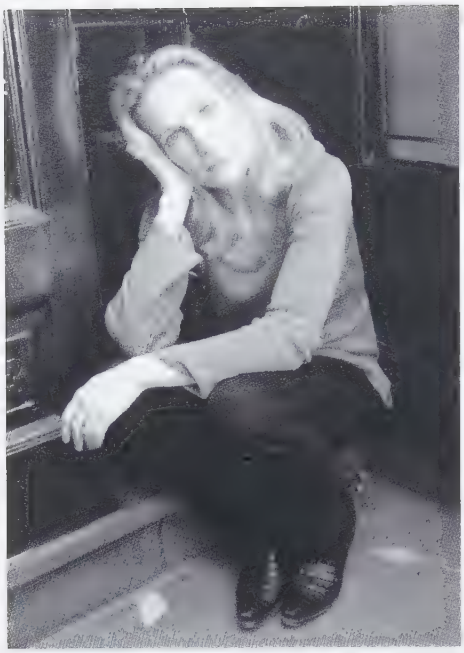

WHY WRITE A MEMOIR?

Kathryn Harrison on *The Kiss*

Harrison's stunning and troubling 1997 book *The Kiss*—by now a staple on the reading lists of women's studies and memoir-writing classes all over the country—has just been reissued by Random House with a new afterward by Jane Smiley. Essentially abandoned by both her parents and raised by her Jewish maternal grandparents, Harrison's memoir, says its publisher, "transforms into a work of art the darkest passage imaginable in a young woman's life: an obsessive love affair between father and daughter that begins when she, at age 20, is reunited with the father whose absence had haunted her youth." **Yona Zeldis McDonough**, Lilith's fiction editor, spoke with Harrison in Brooklyn in March.

Did you have any idea of the sensation *The Kiss* would cause when it was first published?

I was fortunate in being unable to anticipate the kind of response the book received. By 1997, I'd lived with the fallout of incest for 16 years, the last seven of which I'd been in psychoanalysis, working to understand how I had been so readily manipulated by my father. Why, at 20, I hadn't protected myself from a man everyone around me perceived as dangerous.

When *The Kiss* came out it had been many years since I'd had the luxury of the perspective of those for whom incest remains taboo—I could no longer be shocked in the same way they could. I'd studied incest literally from the inside out—from the personal to the psychoanalytic to the literary and anthropological. It had become a topic of intellectual interest as well as one that I'd had no choice but to approach on an emotional and psychological level.

In her afterword, Jane Smiley describes it as breaking the spell: of silence, coercion, and shame. It took great courage to write this book.

If I don't see it as courage it's because I didn't see any choice in the matter. Courage seems less self-interested than what prompted me to write the book and seek its publication. For as long as my relationship with my father remained a secret, my father still owned and controlled me. There was no freedom from him in remaining silent. The book represents an essential step in saving myself from my father.

Do you think *The Kiss* helped start the present memoir craze? What's your feeling about these confessional books?

I'm not sure I can credit my one book with the rise of memoir. Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club* had been published, to huge success,

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOYCE RAVID

as well as Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* and Vivian Gornick's *Fierce Attachments*. Readers had discovered an appetite for stories of ordinary lives and all the readily available drama they contain. The subject matter of my memoir makes me one of the more notorious writers within the genre, and that may be liberating for others who want to tell stories that are outside of convention. The book can be received as permission to explore other impolite topics. Once the culture arrived at a degree of comfort in speaking about aspects of human life we used to consider almost unreachable by language—unspeakable—it was only a matter of time before writers turned their attention to alcoholism, infidelity, incest, addiction, physical abuse. The species has an impressive talent for self-destruction.

When *The Kiss* came out, there were critics who said that incest was not a subject for literature. I disagreed then, as I do now. Narrative offers a means of approaching and understanding what might not be appropriate cocktail party fodder but that we need, as human beings, to illuminate. How can we understand and unlock the prisons we make for ourselves if we refuse to examine them, turn away, shut our eyes?

Memoir attracts writers with difficult, often unhappy, stories that, once articulated, are borne differently, perhaps more easily, than they were when they remained uninvestigated and unshared. The reader bears witness to the writer's experience even as the writer offers his own life up as a reference point.

When I was still entangled with my father, I looked for accounts of father-daughter incest, and found nothing other than Anaïs Nin and the odd case history (which was more helpful than Nin, whose reported experience was so unlike mine, so… apparently comfortable that I couldn't approach it as nonfiction). A book like *The Kiss* might not be for everyone, but if the letters I get are indicative, it's been a source of comfort and understanding for the readers who sought it out.

You have three children, two of whom are now in college. What has the impact of this book been on them?

My youngest is 10 now, and knows only that my father and I are estranged, as we had been for all my childhood. I've spoken frankly about what happened between my father and me with her older siblings, and I know her sister, now 21, has read it. The publication occurred when the older kids were 7 and 5, so it was easy to protect them from evidence of it—we had no TV, and we kept all print media out of their sight. That meant I could wait to speak to them about it until they had the capacity to begin to understand what I was telling them.

It was a difficult thing for me to share my history with my children. A part of me understands herself as indelibly polluted and therefore unlovable. Though the relationship has been over for 25 years, it retains its power to isolate me, to make me, as my father threatened it would, an untouchable. Cerebrally, I knew telling them was the right thing to do, just as I knew that to not write the book or seek publication on their account could have only inspired my resentment of them, as it was a story I needed to write and share. Revealing the relationship that had exiled me from the world was my only way back into the fold of human company.

Beyond the existence of the book, my children needed to know what had happened in my early life because it continues to have so profound an impact on me; for better and for worse, incest was a formative experience; it is with me every day. Were I to hide so large and influential a part of my history—*myself*—away from my children, they could only experience the evasion as rejection, their mother's refusal to share herself, which would be more destructive.

I can't be specific about the reactions of my older children because that is part of their private lives. My older daughter's understanding of my past and my choice to write about it has changed from the point at which she discovered the book's existence (on the Internet, when she was 12) to now, when she is in college, a sophisticated reader of all kinds of narratives. It was not an easy thing for her at first, to learn her mother had a public persona and that other people had known things about me that she did not—that was the aspect she seemed to find most upsetting. But she understands now what she didn't at 12, and I think she's both proud and protective of me, having dipped into some of the more vitriolic reactions to the book. My son has been less forthcoming about his feelings, but I don't see any evidence of his remaining troubled by the knowledge—he's a remarkably balanced and happy individual.

***The Kiss* contains some excruciatingly memorable scenes: one in which you describe prying open the sealed eyelids of newborn kittens whose eyes then become infected from the intrusion, another as a teenager in a gynecologist's office, a third a conversation with your father in which you implore him to release you from the unholy union that binds you. All three scenes appeared in your novel *Thicker Than Water*, published six years earlier. Can you talk about your decision to revisit this material, and about the differences in using it in these two contexts, fiction and memoir?**

As a young writer I had one story to tell, the family drama that began with my mother getting pregnant with me at 17 and ended 24 years later with her death and my escaping my father's influence. In my twenties, everything I wrote addressed some aspect of that one story. *Thicker Than Water*, published when I was 30, was a typical first novel in that it was helplessly autobiographical. Once it was out in the world I was sorry to have fictionalized an account of incest. Unwittingly, I'd complied with the cultural directive to lie about what happened, to back off from a confession of incest and say, in so many words, that I'd made the whole thing up. I'd fictionalized the truth, betrayed it and myself.

I wrote two more novels, each of which dealt with aspects of my relationship with my father, neither of which assuaged my disappointment with my first book. And then, in 1995, when I was having endless trouble revising a novel-in-progress, I suddenly understood that the problem with the novel was that I had no interest in writing it. There was only one thing I wanted to write, and that was a correction to my first novel: a non-fiction account of my relationship with my father. A book that said, "this really happened, and it happened to me."

I'd struggled for a decade with the fact that I had an "unspeakable" story to tell. I knew it was a story I wasn't supposed to tell, but I also knew I wouldn't be able to develop as a writer, or do anything of value with the rest of my life, until I did. ■

AND THE BRIDE WORE GREEN

Can your wedding reflect your eco-values?

BY SHAYLA GUNTER-GOLDSTEIN

Her granddaughter is getting married. The grandmother readies her guest list. What? An Evite? No reply card? No meat on the menu? Forest moss as a centerpiece? Once all about tradition, today's weddings are much more about the values and desires of the bride and groom—or the bride and bride, or the groom and groom. Green is the new white, and green weddings are being embraced—and in many locales spearheaded—by Jews.

In shtetl times, weddings were actually eco-conscious in a way that's coming back into fashion and is extremely important to ecologically aware couples today. Many are marrying later than in previous generations, know what they want, and may themselves be paying for a large portion of their wedding celebration. In our grandparents' (or great-grandparents') time, ceremonies were simple. Receptions included food and pastries prepared by friends and relatives, decorations were from your garden and household. The chuppah was Ur-Bubbe's yom tov tablecloth fastened to four branches from the woods, and far-away guests mailed a letter of congratulations to the couple. Brides simply wouldn't dream of buying a new dress when 10 other girls in the village had perfectly lovely dresses to lend.

Jewish couples are getting back to such basics. As "millennials" are getting engaged, these young people in their late 20s and early 30s who've grown up with environmental awareness as an integral part of their education are finding ways to incorporate their green consciousness into this special day. Gen-Xers (35-45) are embracing the movement too, according to Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, author of *The Creative Jewish Wedding Book* and a wedding officiant with Journeys of the Heart in Philadelphia. Mayer says, "Couples are making choices intuitive to people who are ecologically aware. They're also looking at the root of the traditions of Jewish wedding celebrations and asking themselves how they can evolve, grow and adapt to truly reflect modern times and the couples' own beliefs."

This kind of thinking wasn't on my radar when I got married eight years ago. I am one of those people who regrets not having done a more eco-conscious wedding. If I had to do it again, I'd be doing things much differently. I would definitely consider local seasonal flowers and local organic produce if I could.

In discussing food and wine for the wedding, Kaplan-Mayer notes a new eco-kashrut: "How can the meaning of kosher evolve? Eco-conscious couples want to connect their ideals and concerns about where food comes from into their wedding planning process. The whole discussion about food and ethics is steeped in Jewish traditions."

For some, that means kosher organic meat, for others it means vegetarian or vegan, and for many, it means purchasing local and/or organic foods whose harvest and production did not oppress workers. According to Cleveland-area Reconstructionist Rabbi Shawn Zevit, "Kashrut isn't just

ILLUSTRATION BY SUSAN PICKOVER

about food; it's about ethical practice. The word *kasher* is actually translated in the Torah to mean an appropriate and successful course of action." He also suggests that synagogues consider offering bulk discounts for groups of couples wishing to go green for *simchas*. A synagogue could purchase large quantities of compostable plates and cutlery, organic produce, even décor items, and the caterer can work with families to plan green simchas. To Rabbi Zevit's knowledge, this idea is not yet being practiced, but it would increase the sense of community in a congregation.

The idea that an eco-conscious wedding might be a tree-hugging, granola-eating event with a backyard barbecue feel is one reason that some families may be hesitant to take the plunge. Is there any other resistance, or criticism of green wedding plans? While there were a few skeptics on guest lists, few couples I spoke with had experienced conflict with family over their decisions. "The idea of *tzedakah* and being true to the earth are such Jewish ideals and are so natural for us," says Kate Harrison, author of *The Green Bride Guide: How to Create an Earth-Friendly Wedding on Any Budget* and creator of its companion website (*www.greenbrideguide.com*). Of her own wedding she says, "There were very few objections."

However, Tikka Smiley of Toronto, a vegan for 20 years, said that the completely vegan menu for her 2002 wedding was challenging for her future in-laws, who were not vegetarian. They worried about guests' reactions. Tikka admits the menu was met with some trepidation, and two complaints were voiced during the evening, but mostly she heard compliments from guests who were pleasantly surprised that Tofu Wellington could be so tasty.

Menus are often the main source of tension. Couples may want to go vegetarian or use local and organic caterers, but have difficulty finding a kosher option. Eco- and budget-conscious couples can keep their menu simpler, limiting appetiz-

ers or choosing more inexpensive, earth-friendly options such as sustainable fish, poultry and vegetable proteins. Parents often need convincing, and if parents are paying, they may feel they should have more of a say in the matter. Couples paying for a large portion of the wedding themselves still want to keep *shalom bayit*, peace in the home, make sure they include parents in some of the decision-making.

Walter Vaz of Zuchter-Berk Catering, one of Toronto's largest kosher catering companies, says parents also fear that going green may make the wedding seem inferior, and weddings, for many, are still about image. Vaz worked recently with a Toronto couple that took myriad steps to have an eco-friendly wedding. The décor included 100 percent recycled items and natural décor taken from a forest floor, with nothing live. "The parents were skeptical about the menu, but then we did a tasting and showed them what we could do with organic, local and sustainable. They were thrilled beyond belief."

Julisse Levy, a wedding planner with A Bride's Nature in Tampa, Florida, has encountered some hesitation on the part of grandparents. "They don't believe going green will make a difference or it will take too long to plan… perhaps they're afraid they won't be around for the simcha." One couple helped quell their grandparents' fears by getting them involved. They asked older guests—aunts, uncles, grandparents—to bring framed tabletop photos of their own weddings, which were then used to decorate the room. "It was a beautiful way to incorporate family history into the wedding."

"Couples want to personalize their weddings, and going green sparks their creativity," explained Mireya Navarro, a New York Times environment writer and author of *Green Wedding: Planning Your Eco-Friendly Celebration*. In some cases, couples have to compromise to help ease tensions. For example, they might send Evites to their own friends, and send simple printed invitations on recycled paper to guests who aren't comfortable with email. "Couples are very mindful of the opinions of the older generations. They don't want to insult anyone."

On the larger scale of wedding planning, the eco-movement is most noticeable so far in more liberal Jewish congregations, such as Reconstructionist and Reform. Orthodox communities however, have been incorporating green aspects into their simchas for decades. In several cities, there's a communal lending resource; a *Gemach* (the acronym for *gemilut chasadim*, or acts of kindness) lends, among other things, wedding dresses, headpieces and décor items. The gemach was once a mainstay of traditional Jewish life in European communities. Canfei Nesharim (*www.canfeinesharim.org*) is leading the environmental education movement in the Orthodox world.

Going green at your wedding, say those in the forefront of the movement, starts with thinking about your own ideals and what's important to you as a couple. Rabbi Zevit suggests that couples "do a values audit and ask themselves what's really necessary. Then they can make a conscious decision." The Washington-based Jews United for Justice (*www.juff.org*) has produced a guide to *Green and Just Celebrations* for all simchas and life-cycle events, and sees each as "a precious opportunity to grow more mindful of the ways that everyday choices can both connect us with our tradition and help us live our values."

Tikka Smiley says "It has always been important to me, when having simchas, to make as little of an environmental impact as possible. Why should future generations suffer for our joyous events today?" Her wedding, held before going green was fash-

Ask older guests—aunts, uncles, grandparents—to bring framed tabletop photos of their own weddings. Use them to decorate the room.

IT'S FINALLY EASY BEING GREEN!

- **Wedding planning often starts with the dress. *www.greenbrideguide.com* suggests donating your dress after the wedding, or opting for an eco-chic dress from the start.**
- **Register green, register union! Use Jewish National Fund's Go Neutral Calendar to have guests register to offset their travel carbon-footprints.**
- **The Jews United for Justice *Green and Just Celebration Guide* thinks you should hire an employment-program caterer, or serve locally grown organic delicacies. Then donate leftovers to a food bank to help the larger community.**
- **Get in touch with your local guests to see if they can host a few out-of-towners, to save on money and resources. Or host your guests at a hotel where workers have a strong voice.**
- **Bring Jewish holidays into your celebrations by timing your wedding with the Jewish calendar. For example, on Tu B'Shvat the seven species can be used for centerpieces, or incorporated into the menu; Autumn's harvest offers a bounty of menu ideas for a Sukkot wedding. Guests' Hanukkiahs can create stunning centerpieces.**
- **If you have many people who would need to travel to attend our wedding, consider a "road show" celebration, where only local guests come to your main ceremony, then you travel to the few towns where other guests live and host smaller celebrations such as a havdalah ceremony and dessert reception, or a dinner party or a brunch. The cost of one couple traveling in this way is much less than asking dozens of people to travel.**

—CLARA ROTTER-LAITMAN AND SONIA ISARD

ionable, included no live flowers, a one-page recycled-paper invitation, floating soy candle centerpieces, and homemade recycled keepsake boxes as giveaways. Her gown, made by a seamstress, has since become part of her work costume, and the groom's shirt and kippah were made out of excess material from the dress.

Kate Harrison took dozens of steps to make sure her own 2007 wedding left as small a carbon footprint as possible, but also incorporated her Jewish roots. Kate and her husband Barry Muchnick—both with backgrounds in environmental studies—wanted to create a wedding that was about who they were and what they believed in. "Because you have to make all of the choices anyway, we kept the environmental impact of each decision in mind and tried to do our best to pick eco-friendly options." They hosted the event where a majority of their guests lived in order to reduce travel; served local, organic food; chose seasonal, local, organic flowers, and recycled papers for anything that was being printed for the wedding. Using heirloom pieces during the ceremony also allowed them to continue family traditions. Their kiddush cup was engraved with their parent's and grandparent's names, and their poles holding up the heirloom-tablecloth chuppah were branches that had been engraved with the initials of the many family members who'd used them previously.

On her own wedding website, Harrison invites couples to share their own green wedding stories. "I think it's wonderful how truly committed couples are," she says. "What's exciting, though, is that you can demonstrate to the people you love that you can make eco-friendly choices without sacrificing style, fun, beliefs or values. It can be an incredible opportunity for environmental education in a really positive moment."

Is going green a more expensive option for a festivity that usually already costs a staggering sum? Costs for going green can add an extra three to eight percent to a wedding budget, especially if you're planning on organic meat. However, eco-friendly weddings can, in fact, end up costing less than traditional weddings, if a couple is creative and eco-savvy. A borrowed or vintage gown obviously can save a tremendous amount of money. Evites, décor, local produce, having smaller, simpler affairs, serving homemade desserts. These small individual decisions add up to large impact.

Green-wedding experts agree it's important to educate family, friends and even suppliers during the wedding planning process.

"Learning about environmental values is much more fun through a wedding than through a lecture by Al Gore."

A wedding program or website is an excellent way to explain why you're taking steps to go green. It's also a great way to challenge guests to take action themselves. This is especially potent when you have friends who may also be planning weddings. Mireya Navarro commented that "learning about environmentally green products and values is much more fun through a wedding celebration than through a lecture by Al Gore."

Rabbi Cheryl Weiner helped produce the Los Angeles Progressive Jewish Alliance version of *Green and Just Celebrations*. When a couple decides to have an eco-conscious wedding, she explains, they're "changing the consciousness of what a wedding could be, would be and should be. They're also altering the consciousness of their guests." Joelle Novey, was involved in the research for the original *Green and Just Guide*, said that in preparing the guide they asked, "do we just encourage people to undertake more green options of traditional practices… or can we help people think critically and rethink the scale and opulence of Jewish weddings? That is the most challenging idea to our culture."

Novey's own 2008 wedding was a good example. From the one-page 100% recycled paper invitations, to using friend-made flower pots with living plants as centerpieces, to registering with an alternative registry, her wedding to Ethan Merlin was an extension of their life philosophy. "We embraced the opportunity to make green choices as a way of sharing the ways we hope to live life as a family going forward."

"You have to be kind of brave," Novey says, "to do something different for your wedding. There's a strong sense that everyone knows what to expect, so anytime you see people doing something differently, you become more confident to do something different yourself. Each couple that is brave enough to do something publicly in a different way helps embolden others and can have an impact on helping to eventually change the culture." ■

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein is a Toronto-based writer, a part-time event planner, and a full-time mother of two young boys.

HERE'S HOW ONE CREATIVE COUPLE DID IT:

Ethan Merlin and Joelle Novey were married at Gann Academy in Waltham, Massachusetts in 2008. Joelle notes, "By getting married at a school we knew that our rental fees were helping to support a worthy non-profit." She continues, "Our first green choice was to have a vegetarian meal. We're both vegetarians, and we thought our guests wouldn't mind, especially if the food was good! We decided early on to forego cut flowers, which are often grown under poor labor conditions with toxic pesticides, and which cost a lot but last only a short time. Instead, we decorated the wedding canopy with satin ribbon." For the ceremony, Joelle wore a wine-colored dress she could wear again and a white robe. "Traditionally, Jewish men wear a white *kittel* on their wedding day, and we adapted this idea to create a white robe for me to wear as well."

adapted from greenbrideguide.com

Covering our naked bodies has been around since Eden. But walking out the door each day to face the 21st century, we're doing more than mere modesty requires. For many women privileged to have such choices, how we choose to present ourselves is, sweepingly, about identity.

So... what do smart women say about fashion now? Four writers share the soundtrack running through their heads when they put themselves together in the morning.

GETTING DRESSED

by Sonia Isard

Fashion is a completely delightful obsession for my cohort of 20-something women. It's an in-your-face reclamation of the joy of clothes, putting the *femme* in feminism, so to speak. We do our research online, scrolling through endless pages of red carpets and runways—it's easy and satisfying to be an armchair expert.

Part of me loves this—the rising trend of trendiness as a totally legit preoccupation, an art form, in fact. No more hiding the fact that you tweeze, wax, shave, and covet the perfect little black dress that you noticed in the window of that adorable boutique down the street from your non-profit. We all care what we look like, right? So why not run with it? I already hem and haw in front of my closet every sleepy-eyed morning, and it's only fun when I like what I see on the hanger, and then in the mirror. (My personal mantra is entitled: "Boots and Tights" and it goes something like this: "Boots and tights, boots and tights, boots and tiiiights!" It works every time.)

We don't have to look at self-fashioning as an oppressive, retrograde chore that makes us look like we have bad politics. Instead, why not think of the precarious art of self-maintenance as an indulgence and a privilege?

After all, there are so many options for women's self-presentation (at least for a privileged segment of female society). When we dress up, or dress schlumpy, or dress as if we were still at Habonim camp, we already know we're making a statement, performing some kind of female identity. And it seems to me that the by-now-*duh* notion that gender is constructed, performed, cultural, etc., is so Anthro 101 (no longer just Women's Studies 101) that the doors are open for women to actually enjoy the process of feminine self-presentation. More like, "I *get* to put on this sparkly gold sweater/bright red lipstick/soft wool minidress/what have you."

On the other hand (why should we be free to be unambivalent, after all?), this fun with femmey fashion has a darker side. Author Stephanie Coontz has been making the TV rounds exposing what she calls the "hottie mystique," the idea that "young women have to not only achieve in ways you were never expected to achieve before, but to compensate for that achievement they must show that they are completely hot, sexual and desirable." Marjorie Ingall, over at the online magazine Tablet, is also a skeptic: "We may tell our girls to be strong, faithful, brave, and smart, but the overarching message they get is that beauty trumps all else." Sure, I genuinely love my mani-pedi—it makes me feel sharp, together, and yes, empowered. But that's $40 I could spend on a subscription to The Economist, an hour I could spend getting ahead on ever-mounting deadlines or fomenting the revolution. Is that a choice most men ever even think about? I often deeply resent the time and energy it takes to maintain some arbitrary threshold I made up called "It's OK to go grocery shopping in this outfit." What's the hidden cost of prioritizing prettiness?

Still, I know I feel much braver and more adventurous, more willing to step out of my comfort zone throughout the day, when I feel put-together pretty (enough). More vaudeville than Vogue, more burlesque than bourgeois, acknowledging this frees me up to embrace some traditionally feminine aesthetic practices. And for me, at least for now, thinking about the presentation of femininity as "play" on a grand scale—that's what makes fashion feel like an art, rather than a burden. ■

Sonia Isard is Lilith's assistant editor

YEMIMA TAMIR

NO THANKS FOR THE LIBERATION

by Rokhl Kafrissen

This year we're celebrating the 20th anniversary of the publication of Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*. I can't pinpoint the exact moment I read it, but it had to be close to it's publication in 1991. My mom had purchased it in hardcover, so I was, let's say, 16 when I read it. If 12 is the golden age of science fiction, then 16 is the age at which revolutionaries are made, should the right books fall into the right hands.

I already had my junior feminist's card by the time I picked up *The Beauty Myth*. Some memories:

Age 8: My synagogue holds an all-ages, all-sexes, pre-High Holidays shofar blowing workshop. It must have been a slow news day, because the local cable news channel came out to cover our tentative *tikiahs*. And somewhere there exists a VHS tape of me, a super-gawky little me, in white unicorn sweatshirt and corduroy pinstripe pants (my stylingest outfit), giving my thoughts about learning to blow the shofar. Except, instead of talking about the shofar, I decided that it was my moment to tell the world it needed more women rabbis! Which is strange, because I hated going to "temple" with a passion and found it beyond boring, even with a lady rabbi, as I discovered years later. (Sorry, lady rabbis. It's not you, it's me)

Age 12: Being most generous with my opinions about various injustices, I was asked to lecture my fellow students in honor of Womens' History Month; my first foray into consciousness raising. For my material I turned to what I knew best—after school cartoons. I asked my classmates to ponder why the Smurfs were defined by their traits, but Smurfette was defined by her femininity. Smurfette, not Freud, taught me that anatomy was destiny.

Age 16: When *The Beauty Myth* fell into my hands, I finally had access to a sustained analysis of the construction (and enforcement) of modern femaleness, one that went far beyond the enchanted mushroom colony of the Smurfs. *The Beauty Myth* wasn't so much a theoretical framework, as an exposé. Naomi Wolf showed how economic, legal and social advances made by women had been met by a retrenchment of social controls on women. She proposed that womens' self-image, the way they presented themselves, was perhaps the final battleground in the fight to maintain women as a subservient class.

The "beauty myth," she argued, was a brilliant way to make women themselves complicit in their own disenfranchisement by making the feminine ideal so unattainable, so expensive, so dangerous and—most importantly—so time consuming, that women as a political category would not be able to move forward as they had in the 70s to promote abortion rights and end legal discrimination.

The book is heavy. One of its central images is the Iron Maiden—a coffin painted with the image of a lovely young woman, where prisoners would be entombed to die a slow death (or painful and quick, if the Maiden had spikes). For Wolf, beauty was a burden, and a dangerous one at that. After reading *The Beauty Myth* I looked around and saw that every step I took into womanhood was impossibly heavy with the demands that I examine, alter and perhaps even mutilate myself in ways that were never demanded of my male peers. At 16, the mother of one of my best friends suggested I get electrolysis to curb the unladylike dark fuzz that trailed down the sides of my face. Coincidentally, she was also the mother of the only one of my friends who had plastic surgery, a nose job, the summer between 11th and 12th grade. I needed no clearer demonstration that the distance between hair removal and surgical mutilation was dangerously short. At 16, *every* concession to the beauty myth became, to me, a skirmish in a life or death battle.

What to do with the realization that you live in a culture that won't be satisfied until self-mutilation is not only normal, but necessary? Being 16 is bad enough, but now I was trying to figure out how to be 16 and also stay out of the clutches of the beauty-industrial complex that surely wanted to rape, mutilate and lobotomize me. As for many revolutionaries, there could be no compromise.

One answer is to take it to the people. One of my very close friends was the editor of the high school newspaper, and I got a column in the paper with a title only a Bolshevik could love: "The Cockroach of Sexism." Though I thank God that this was way before the days of Google, I'm still proud that I got people thinking about issues of sexism and homophobia. "The Cockroach of Sexism" was a positive channel for my feminist rage, and it was also the first step I took as a journalist.

There was a lot of rage, and a lot of hopelessness. Looking back on that time, I think it was tragic that rather than engage with the beauty myth, as all my friends did, finding some kind of place they felt comfortable, I pretty much rejected all of it. That didn't mean I liked the way I looked. It didn't mean I had the male attention I most definitely wanted. It just meant I was miserable and had sideburns and hairy legs and only my ideals to keep me warm at night.

Reflecting on the weakness of *The Beauty Myth* today, as a more mature feminist and as a much happier, more confident woman, I see that there was no place in Wolf's world for female agency. In her view, women were helpless before the ravenous maw of the "cultural conspiracies" that continually shifted the war on women's self-esteem from their skin to their leg hair to their pubic hair to their un-pornified labia. Aside from her rather naive calls for a new female culture of solidarity, Wolf offered no strategies for survival in the hostile world she described. If you still cared about the way you looked, her message seemed to be, then you simply didn't get it.

The other thing that Wolf didn't address in *The Beauty Myth* was beauty privilege. I can still remember my moment of scandalized shock, and relief, when I asked a friend if she had been revolutionized by the book. She shook her head and said that it was hard to be told by a woman as beautiful as Wolf that beauty shouldn't matter. With her striking features, big eyes, thick, luxurious hair, Wolf is as gorgeous today as she was at 28, when she published *The Beauty Myth*.

Her book had another big blind spot when it came to the intersection of race, class and gender. As a white, American-born, middle-class woman, I had the luxury of rejecting beauty ideals without suffering an economic impact (just its disastrous effects on my love life).

It was hard to be told by a woman as beautiful as Naomi Wolf that beauty shouldn't matter.

The real turning point in my approach to self-presentation came when I was 25, a first-year law student. I met the woman who would become one of my closest friends in the world. Olga was blond, covered in tattoos, wore leopard print and pink without apologies, and was unashamed of her love for Hello Kitty (something I never revealed to anyone before I met Olga).

Olga was also a radical feminist. We organized the women students' association at our school. We dreamed about ditching law school and starting a Jewish pagan coven. We promised to perform each other's abortions should the day come when abortion was once again forced into back alleys.

Olga cared immensely about the way she looked. As she put it, when you're a poor, fat, immigrant and your name is Olga, yeah, people are going to judge you on the way you look, and you better look good. But instead of setting out to fit in, which as she intuited early on was fairly pointless, Olga set out to express herself in the most beautiful and most authentic way possible. Everywhere we went, people were in awe of her.

Our law school being only a few blocks from the enormous Anthropologie on Fifth Avenue, Olga and I spent many afternoons there drooling over expensive frilly sweaters and adorable sailor pants. Olga's husband was a painter, and their house was always full of his art, the art of their many artist friends and the beautiful things they had acquired over the years.

What I saw in Olga was an integrated kind of beauty and self-expression. Her sense of style was expressed in her tattoos, her precise taste in sneakers (no white soles) and her impeccable home. Rather than letting the Iron Maiden's lid close on her, Olga kicked the lid right off. No matter what she did, she always had a deeply informed political analysis of her actions. Beauty is not much different than other aspects of our lives—beauty is political, but so is what we eat (can we eat beef if it contributes to deforestation?) what we buy (can we avoid all unethically produced goods?) how we give birth (C-section or vaginal?) and pretty much every facet of being alive today.

And each of those choices is inflected by the economic and social privilege held by the chooser. For me, an important part of being a progressive is recognizing my own privilege as well as not judging others against my own. I wouldn't dare judge a poor family for buying cheap beef. So why should I beat myself up for wanting to have the smooth cheeks prized by our culture and naturally possessed by many, but not all, women?

I learned to stop judging myself against a ridiculous standard of imagined feminist purity. I discovered that I could have fun with makeup in a way that didn't feel burdensome or fake. I didn't have to wear it everyday if I didn't want to (itself an important privilege of the clearskinned). I could wear cute clothes and shave, or not, depending on what I wanted. I got electrolysis in my late twenties and wept, not because I was selling out, but because I'd wasted so much time letting the hair make me miserable, but refusing to do anything about it. ■

Rokhl Kafrissen is at rokhl.blogspot.com.

STANDING OUT

by Letty Cottin Pogrebin

In the early years of second-wave feminism, some activists thumbed their noses at Vogue, Seventh Avenue, and their mother's closets. Liberated women wore their disdain for fashion as a badge of honor on their slogan T-shirts. No more dressing to please men. Or to arouse other women's envy. No more color-coordinated outfits. According to these women, if you looked good you couldn't be smart and if you were smart or wanted to be taken seriously you couldn't look good.

Though I deplore the culture's obsessive focus on women's appearance, that bifurcated view never made sense to me. I see dressing ourselves as just another means of expressing our uniqueness and individuality. I think clothes are fun and I pay no attention to the fashion fascists.

What's more, I see the issue Jewishly: In the same way that Judaism expects us to embellish sacred objects, I believe the human body deserves to be embellished. What matters about the Torah are its words, yet we dress the scrolls in velvet, silver bells, and gold trim, to signify the preciousness within. We set a beautiful table for Shabbat and Pesach; we don't make do with paper plates and plastic cups unless we have to.

YEM MA TAMIR

IRA SHRABERMAN, WWW.IRA-SHRABERMAN.COM

Likewise, humanity, the ultimate fruition of God's creation, is worthy of respectful embellishment. Beautification of the body need not signify idolatry of the self but rather a manifestation of the uniqueness of each life, and a measure of how much we value individual creativity and human variety. We dress nicely for services and buy new clothes for Rosh Hashanah. Why go out in *shmattes* the rest of the year?

It's all of a piece with the theology of *perfecting creation*. If you believe, as I do, that it's the job of human beings to improve upon and complete what God couldn't finish, then you will conclude, as I have, that dressing the body is just another opportunity for us to elaborate upon what we have been given.

As for *how* to elaborate and embellish, I'm not interested in this year's "trends." The quickest way to stop me from buying something is to tell me everybody is wearing it. I want what *nobody's* wearing. This, I suppose, is consistent with my resistance to all forms of convention. As an article of faith, I won't conform to anything or anyone who tells a woman what she "should" do—and that includes the arbiters of fashion.

Dena Pinsky is probably to blame for my attraction to counter-conventional clothing. While the rest of us were wearing little white dickies and circle pins, Dena came to school in a shell pink angora sweater and a swirly crushed velvet skirt. I don't

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MIRIT WEINSTOCK FASHION DESIGNER

Israeli clothing designer Mirit Weinstock (*miritweinstock.com*) bucks the trend for fashion that looks better on the hanger than on humans. And instead of turning the camera on professional models, she asks her fans to submit self-portraits. The result? High-art photos of real women wearing Weinstock's real clothes. The artists photographing themselves here all see self-fashioning as a canvas for creativity. In the photos we've selected, Israeli women draw on their own substantial talents to express both drama and playfulness in fashion. Efrat Hassan and Ira Shraberman are photographers whose work has been widely exhibited and published. And the woman on this issue's cover is photographer Alicia Shahaf, also known for her project "Heroines," portraits of women who have suffered sexual assault.

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remember anyone else in my fourth grade class, but I remember Dena. She wore what nobody else was wearing.

Right now I am totally thrilled with my new Ugg boots. Unlike any Uggs I've ever seen, these black sheepskin boots are banded up the leg with shaggy black fur that looks like it was sheared off a long-haired mountain goat. Fabulous! I bought them three weeks ago and I've already worn them 10 times.

Unusual boots are my weakness. Since I'm generally a serious person, I like to wear something quirky for contrast. For instance, the zebra boots I got at Housing Works, the thrift shop whose proceeds benefit people with AIDS. I love that store. People donate all sorts of great shoes and boots, most of them hardly worn. You never know what you'll find there. I haven't been to Macy's or Bloomingdale's in years.

This may be harsh, but I have to say that these days, when I go to a Jewish women's event, nearly everyone looks the same. One year they were all wearing flowing pants and gold jewelry. Now it's black tights and short dresses, blow-dried hair and super-high heels. A herd mentality seems to have taken hold in the Jewish community; it's as if everyone subscribes to the same fashion bulletin and they're trying to out-impress each other with how slavishly they've followed its decrees.

I wonder about the cost for women of subverting their own personal style to conform to this year's look. I wonder if, after constantly crushing their individuality in the fashion arena, they also pay a price—emotional, spiritual, or even political—in terms of how they operate in other contexts and how they feel about themselves in the world. If a woman has sacrificed her authenticity and integrity to fit in with what "everyone is wearing," if she can't go against the grain and wear white after Labor Day and before Memorial Day, if she won't express her creativity and personal style in dress, I worry that she won't have the backbone to go against the grain and demand her rights, or stir the pot of social change, or advocate for the underdog.

In the same way that Judaism expects us to embellish sacred objects, I believe the human body deserves to be embellished.

I'm certainly no fashion plate. My daughters are always begging me to let them edit my closet and get rid of my fringed vest from the 1970s or the pleated skirts I love to wear with boots. I give in sometimes, just to keep peace in the family, but sometimes I retrieve an item from the giveaway pile after they've gone.

When hemlines went down, mine stayed above the knee, because I'm only five foot three, and long skirts make me look like I'm barely 60 inches tall, and make me feel short, which I don't feel otherwise. For the same reason, you will never see me in a round-toe shoe. I think they look stubby. If I had to wear a round-toe shoe just because they're "in," I would have an out-of-body experience; I wouldn't feel like me.

I learned that shoes can be hazardous to your mental and physical health when I was 14, and my boyfriend took me to Times Square on New Year's Eve. After more than a decade of only being allowed to wear brown oxfords or Mary Janes, on this night I wore high-heeled shoes—silk pumps died apple green to match my dress—because my mother said I could, and because I wanted to look older and taller and sexier (not easy when you're still flat-chested), and because the models in Seventeen magazine wore high-heeled pumps when they went out on dates.

Walking to the subway station in Queens, I was already pretty hobbled, and by the time my boyfriend and I got off the F train at 42nd Street, the balls of my feet were like hot coals, the blisters on the back of my heels were bleeding, and the backs of my "sexy" shoes were rubbing bone. I was in agony, and the night had barely begun. I slid a folded up tissue between my heel and the shoe but still couldn't bear the pain, so I finally took off the pumps and in stockinged feet, on December 31st, stood for three hours on a copy of the Daily News that I'd rescued from a trash basket. What a bummer. Needless to say, I had a completely different evening than my comfortably-dressed boyfriend. I felt like a fool.

The point is, fashion isn't trivial; it can be crippling, both literally and metaphorically; it can distort and disfigure who we are, and put a scrim, a false front, between us and other people. I'm talking about core identity, here—how we feel about ourselves as we move through our lives, stand in a public place, enter a party, sit in a meeting. Anything that takes away from our sense of being real and comfortable can't be good for us. So what's with those towering high heeled boots? ■

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, a founding editor of Ms. Magazine, is the author of nine books.

MY COACH BAG

by Yona Zeldis McDonough

Mick Jagger famously sang, "you can't always get what you want," and then consoled us by adding that, sometimes, "you get what you need." But in a long-distant summer of my life, I found, with some surprise, that I was able to do both. It was 1973, and I was 16. My parent's 24-year marriage was lurching and stumbling toward its bitter end, although I did not know that then. What I did know was that when I phoned my father's office — he had been the PR Director at Women's American ORT for many years—one Friday morning in late July, I was told he had gone on vacation. His secretary did not know when he would be back and no, she did not have a number where he could be reached.

I was stunned. True, he had mentioned that he would be going on a trip, though he had been evasive about where and when. Yet nothing quite prepared me for the shame—it was shame, and I can feel it still—of hearing this information from a woman who had only recently started working for him and whom I barely knew. How was it that a virtual stranger was privy to something so vital that I was not? Quietly, I hung up the phone.

My mother's reaction to his departure was to flee herself. She must have been reeling from the shock of it, and the cruelty too; she sought the solace of old and dear friends who lived on the Jersey shore. She left me alone with my 21-year-old brother. Unlike my father, she let me know where and how to reach her,

as well as when she would be coming back. And she also left me cash—several hundred dollars. I remember that they were crisp, new, fresh-from-the-mint bills. She must have gone to the bank to withdraw them.

Once both parents had decamped, my brother's admittedly idiosyncratic coping mechanism was to rearrange our Brooklyn apartment completely, moving furniture and embarking on a vast campaign of de-cluttering and winnowing. Furniture was yanked away from walls and given a new home in another room or ruthlessly tossed; pictures were re-hung or taken down. He was gleeful, even manic in his task. He had been struggling for some time now; dropping out of the School of Visual Arts after a single semester and spending his time on the couch reading, listening to music and trying—with a deceptively low-key kind of urgency—to conjure up a plan about what on earth to do next. I was torn: I was relieved to see his by-now-customary torpor replaced by activity, and I welcomed the chance to connect with him in any way at all. But I also suspected that when our mother returned, she might not be so keen on his little home improvement project.

So I put into action an escape plan of my own. With my parents gone and my brother utterly absorbed by the question of whether or not to paint the apartment, I hurried off to Bloomingdale's on 59th Street in Manhattan. There, on the ground floor, was a handbag I had been lusting after. It was slouchy, bucket shape, in a buttery shade of leather and made by Coach, well before the company had begun to churn out the logo-driven, frou-frou *chazerai* it currently peddles. No, this was the real Coach, the essential Coach—simple yet clever, austere yet elegant—designed by Bonnie Cashin and sporting a thick zipper and the kind of utilitarian but classy brass hardware for which she had become known.

Basking in the endorphin effect of a beloved object

The bag cost $52, a price that was light years beyond anything I had ever paid for a handbag before. But I wanted it so badly, and had dreamed of it, coveted it, and schemed to buy it—babysitting money, allowance—all summer long. Now, amazingly, both the means and the opportunity were mine. I had with me one of the fresh green bills my mother had given me, and I used it to pay for the bag. I had a strong hunch that she was not going to object to any purchase I made in her absence.

The bag came home with me on the subway. I did not feel quite worthy of it, so I left it shrouded in its nest of tissue for several days, allowing myself only occasional, reverent peeks. My mother came home and was predictably horrified by what my brother had done. I felt guilty that I had not tried to stop him, and he and I both meekly accompanied her to the incinerator room to see what we could salvage. This episode was followed by several mournful, tense weeks in which we all kind of spun off our orbits, away from one another; there was little communication or even contact between us.

Then my father returned as suddenly and mysteriously as he had left. "Is that all?" I railed. "Aren't you going to tell us where you were? What you were doing? You owe us an explanation." But he refused to explain, justify or apologize. We did not speak of it again, and by February of the following year he and my mother had decided to separate. By April, he was gone for good, and by August he had remarried. My relationship to him had changed course, and never found its former footing—of love, of trust—again. But that is another story.

And the bag? I finally took it out of its paper and began to use it. Every single day. Immediately, I noticed how comfortable it was to carry. Cashin had revolutionized the handbag industry by doing away with the fussy, structured bags of yore, those tiny, fit-for-a-Barbie-doll accessories with their stiff handles and rigid, unyielding openings. Instead, she worked to create fluid, streamlined shapes that women could carry to work or to school, day or night. She made sure the bag was easy to open, and could be carried on a shoulder, not just gripped with the hand. My own Coach had all these features, plus an ineffable, this-old-thing kind of chic that never ceased to thrill me.

Slung over my shoulder, the bucket bag accompanied me all over the city. It had ample room for my wallet, keys, hairbrush, as well as a paperback book (no Nook, no iPad, no cell phone in those days), an apple or box of raisins, and my Clinique lip gloss in Berry. The bag came with me to college, and then graduate school too, and when it was lifted—silently, stealthily—from the back of my chair at a restaurant, I mourned its loss far more than the scant few bills in my wallet. But the Fates were kind, and the bag—*sans* money, of course—was returned. I was so happy to have it back that I kissed it.

Over the years my bag had changed and evolved. The strap had stretched with use, and the pale, buttery color I loved had darkened to something closer to chestnut. It had acquired a certain sheen by then; it glowed with its own special patina. I still wore it, though not as exclusively any longer. But although I owned many other bags by then, none had been so tied up in my past and so integral to my identity.

I don't remember exactly when the bag and I parted company; maybe I was in my late twenties, maybe I had even hit 30. When I finally let it go, it was nearly mahogany in color and the strap almost black. It was time. I packed it off to Goodwill and replaced it with another Coach, this one black, with a less slouchy and more structured silhouette as befitting (or so I thought) my age and my young-woman-in-the-working-world status. But however stylish and sleek this new Coach was, it never achieved that talismanic power of that other, the first, and in some ways, the only. All those years later, Mick's plaintive words still thrummed true: *if you try sometime, you just might find you get what you need.* And I did. I did. ■

Yona Zeldis McDonough is Lilith's fiction editor.

He Beat Me Black and Blue
Broyn un blo hot er mikh gemakht

YIDDISH SONGS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

BY ADRIENNE COOPER WITH SARAH MINA GORDON

PICTURE THE STAIRWELL in the poor apartment: the neighbor descends the steps and the woman in the doorway repeats, "Good night, good night," and then haltingly speaks the words: "He hit me yesterday. I'm black and blue. I was ashamed to tell you. Good night."

I found the song "Good Night, Brayne" in a 1984 anthology of Yiddish folksongs published by The Hebrew University while I was working with poet Irena Klepfisz and pianist Joyce Rosenzweig on the lives and writings of Yiddish-speaking women. Later, teaching an intergenerational workshop at KlezKanada in Quebec, I asked the class if any of them knew this song. Hands went up. They had learned it as children in their secular Yiddish school, part of the relentless truth-telling that runs through Yiddish culture and the institutions that have taught its values. An East European Jewish folk song collected and preserved by Jewish folklorists in the 19th and early 20th centuries had served as part of a school lesson in 1950s Canada, although the only recorded versions of *A Gutn Ovnt Brayne* that I know of are my own (on "Dreaming in Yiddish" and "Mikveh").

In the European countries where Yiddish was the language of daily life, there were traditions of extravagantly emotional songs of love, suffering, courtship and marriage. People sang violent ballads and graphic depictions of hard lives; songs of war, poverty, danger and natural disasters. Folksongs were like broadsides—carrying the news of the day, declaring the troubles in society. These songs were created and sung largely by women. Women working alongside other women in fields, markets, factories and homes shared songs reflecting their lives, their experiences, thoughts, dreams, imaginings.

THE NAMELESS VICTIM

A gutn ovnt, Brayne/Good Night, Brayne

Good night Brayne	*A gutn ovnt Brayne*
My good neighbor	*Di beste shkheyne mayne*
My heart is in ashes	*Dos harts vert in mir afarbrent*
Since I've known this murderer.	*Zint ikh hob dem merder gekent.*
Yesterday he beat me	*Nekhtn hot er mikh geshlogn*
Made me black and blue	*Broyn un blo hot er mikh gemakht*
I was too ashamed to tell you	*S'iz afile a bezoyen oystsuzogn*
Good night, good night.	*Hot zhe mir a gutinke nakht.*
Oh vey, Brayne	*Oy vey Brayne,*
My good neighbor	*Di beste shkheyne mayne*
My heart is in ashes	*Dos harts vert in mir farbrent*
Since I've known this murderer.	*Zint ikh hob dem merder derkent.*
I forget to buy parsley	*Petrishke hob ikh fargesn koyfn*
My mother had to bring me meat.	*Fleysh hot mir mayn mamele gebrakht*
Oh, the soup's boiled off to nothing	*Oy di yoykh geyt dort oyslofn*
Good night, good night.	*Hot zhe mir a gutinke nakht.*
I want to divorce him	*Kh'volt mit im avade getn*
Leave the child to him	*Dos kind volt ikh im ibergelozt*
But I am so all alone	*Bin ikh ober shreklekh elent*
I could just lie down in the street.	*Khotsh gey un leyg zikh af der gas.*

Oy Vey Brayne is a frank depiction of domestic abuse. The nameless victim says good night to her neighbor, and with each verse adds another detail of the abuse and its effect on her. She lists tasks thwarted by the beating. "I forgot to buy parsley/My mother had to bring me meat/Oh the soup's boiled off to nothing." Finally, she considers divorcing her husband and going off alone—unable, in her despair, to imagine caring for her child: "I want to divorce him/Leave the child to him/ But I am so all alone, / I could just lie down in the street."

The melody and rhythm of the song support the lyrics. The description of the beating in the first verse comes in rapid staccato, with a note on each quick, successive syllable: *Nekhtn hot er mikh geshlogn*. The chorus begins with a drawn out, "*Oy vey, Brayne*." The woman calls out her neighbor's name, finally managing to tell someone. The melody on the words "my good neighbor" rises to call Brayne back, and "my heart" is cried out higher still. The last line of the chorus darkens and descends as she names her husband as murderer.

ART: SHIFRA WHITEMAN, *GEDRUKTE SHTUMKAYT* (PRINTED SILENCE), 2011.

The images in the song are stark, vivid, and we can't turn away. We, like the neighbor, are called to witness the loneliness and to hear the desperate declarations. We see the shame, we witness the loss of control over the simple tasks of daily life, and we see a final image of descent—a battered body sinking to the street and lying still. How many women suffered behind the apartment doors of Warsaw and Krakow? How many women carried bruises in the *shtetlekh*, the towns of Poland and Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine?

FIGHTING BACK

Soreles khasene / Sarah's Wedding

When Sorele wed, people laughed and scoffed.
Why the laughter? The brand new bride
Couldn't even make kugl for Shabbes.

Zi hot im ongehoybn mitvokh in der fri,
Un hot im farendikt fraytik far nakht
Ay ay ay,
Un az me hot dos kugele tseshnitn

She began on Wednesday morning
Finished late on Friday, but on Shabbes
There was stuff in there that made that kugl inedible.
Her husband, furious, beat his wife
With each end of a stick.
"Oh, my husband, What the hell are you doing?
You beat your wife for a pudding?"
"Oh my cursed little wife, that kugl cost me money."
She grabs her poor possessions
And takes off for her father's for Shabbes.

Hot men gefunen an onetshke in mitn.
Hot der man genumen a shtekn mit tsvey ekn,
Un hot ongehoybn dos vaybele tsu dekn…ay-ay-ay-ay!
Oy mayn man, a tsore in dayn layb!
Tsi far a kugele/shlogt men a vayb?
Ay ay ay
Oy, mayn vayb, azoy fil hostu makes,
Vifl dos kugele kost mikh piatakes.
Hot zi gekhapt ire alte shkrabes
Un iz avek tsu ir tatn oyf shabes..
Ay ay ay

"Sorele's Wedding" tilts toward common comic themes in folksongs: the inexperienced bride and the challenge of satisfying a finicky husband. But the consequences of a failed kugl turn

menacing, as punishment is delivered "with both ends of a stick." The rhythm of the song is somber, slow, and the chorus repeats the lamenting syllables, "Ay, ay, ay, ay, ay," over and over again. However, in this song, the young wife doesn't sink to the street; she is not silent. She confronts her husband. Sorele names the abuse, grabs some of her things, and leaves for the protection of her father's house and the peace of an undisturbed Sabbath. This named woman, Sorele, serves as a role model.

POVERTY AND DYSFUNCTION

Di lyalke/The Doll

Poverty pervaded Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Families, often unable to meet even the barest of necessities, crumbled under the pressure. In Mordechai Gebirtig's *Di Lyalke*/The Doll, the spectre of poverty-driven abuse hangs in the air of child's play. A little girl sets up a scenario with a playmate:

Come Shloymele, bring the cradle. Let's play. You'll be the father, I'm the Mother, the doll is our child. You come home, not bringing any money. And I fight with you: Good for nothing! Our child is cold and you can't buy her shoes. You come home worried and I'm on you in a rage: Worthless! Our child is hungry, suffering. You call yourself a father? And when the child cries, gets hungry, no bread, no money in the house—then I curse it, "Die already!" just like my mother curses me.

To document the daily life of young Jews in Eastern Europe, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research—then based in Vilna, Poland—sponsored essay contests in the 1930s. They received teenage autobiographies, in Yiddish, Polish and Hebrew. Jeffrey Shandler detailed for me the family abuse in some of these chronicles, collected in his book *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust*. Among the hauntingly frank and full stories of young lives are depictions documenting the tragic link between economic hardship and abuse. "Khane," after her parents divorce, was regularly beaten by her mentally unbalanced mother while they wandered homeless for years. "A. Greyno" suspected that his parents might have killed their newborn baby because they were unable to feed another child. The parents of "Forget-Me-Not" fought constantly. After the death of his mother, his father abandoned the children to an orphanage.

Shvigern/Mothers-in-Law

When couples married they did not necessarily become autonomous heads of their own households. Many a new bride—often a teenager in an arranged marriage—moved in with her husband's family. There she lived under the control of a stranger, her mother-in-law. A large repertoire of proverbs and songs describe the conflict and the lack of empathy in these relationships between women:

A mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law in one house are like two cats in one sack.
A shviger un a shnur in eyn hoyz zenen vi tsvey kets in eyn zak.

The mother-in-law has forgotten that she too was once a daughter-in-law.
Di shviger hot fargesn az zi iz amol aleyn geven a shnur.

Several of these kinds of songs and sayings are from Robert Rothstein, who compares the fate of married women in a paper "The Sad Lot of Women in Ukrainian and Yiddish Folksongs." He quotes folk proverbs of the two side-by-side communities. Ukrainian proverbs point to a greater level of domestic violence: "When your own mother beats you, it does not hurt so much, while a mother-in-law beats worse with words than with her fists." Rothstein says that there is no parallel in Yiddish for the harrowing Ukrainian proverb in which a mother teaches her son how to punish his wife—beating with a poker, whipping, offering instructions for binding the wife with wire.

Faced with a parallel loss of identity and power, young Jewish women's songs about love and marriage become gloomy and mournful, filled with dramatic depictions of loneliness and isolation. It seems that no matter what a young bride does, she cannot satisfy the mistress of the house.

Oy mama, what should I do
I have a cruel mother-in-law
Always on my case
If I walk fast, she says
I'm wearing out my shoes
If I walk slowly, she says that I'm crawling
If I cook fish, she says it has no taste;
If I don't cook, she makes a big to-do,
If I make chicken soup,
She says it tastes like ashes
If I don't make any,
The house is filled with screaming.
Oy vey mame

Oy vey mame, vos zol ikh tun,
Ikh hob a beyze shviger hot zi mit mir tsu tun.
Geyh ikh gikh, shrayt zi ikh rays di shikh,
Gey ikh pamelekh, shrayt zi az ikh krikh,
Kokh ikh fish, zogt zi s'iz on tam
Kokh ikh nit, makht zi in shtub a tararam,
Kokh ikh yoykh, zogt zi s'iz mit ash.
Kokh ikh nit, makht zi in shtub a rash.

With this fraught home life, some songs idealize life before marriage and a woman's relationship with her own mother, in contrast to that with her mother-in-law.

I rest my head on my mother's bed
My mother passes by and beams.
"Sleep my beautiful daughter.
Let your little eyes close in good health!"

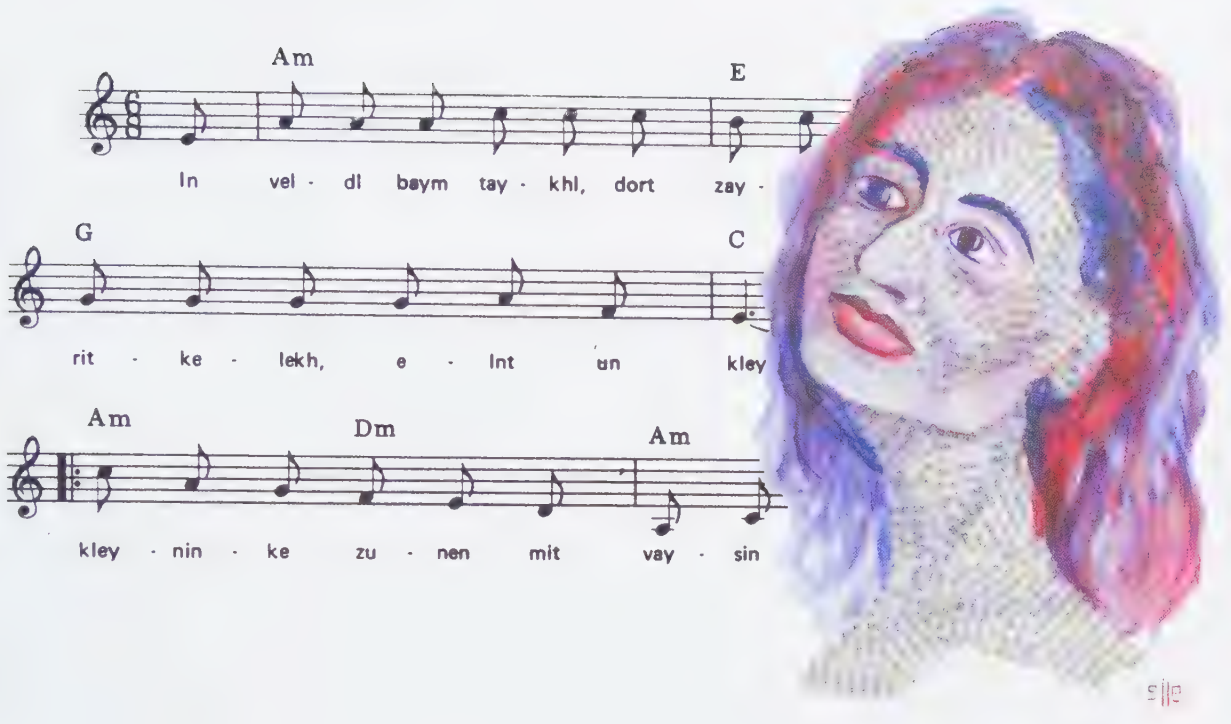
I lay my head on my mother-in-law's bed
My mother-in-law passes by and curses;
"My daughter-in-law is no real wife.
Gets no work done, just sleeps and sleeps."

Leyg ikh mir mayn kepele oyf mayn mames betele
Geyt di mame farbay nokh anand zi tut un kvelt
Shlof mayn tokhter sheyninke, eygelekh hostu kleyninke.
Shlof gezunterheyt, shlof gezunterheyt.

Leyg ikh mir mayn kepele oyf mayn shvigers betele,
Geyt di shviger farbay nokh anand zi tut un shelt.
Mayn shnur iz keyn berye nit, keyn melokhe tut zi nit!
Nokh anand zi tut un shloft.

Animosity between new wife and mother-in-law is depicted as a common and expected experience. In the song "The In-Laws" the mother of the bride warns the mother of the groom not to mess with her child. "*Tomer vet ir zayn a shlyak, a beyze shviger/ iz mayn tokhter oykhet an antic.*" / If you turn out to be a shrew, a mean mother-in-law,/ My daughter is no slouch either."

Songs transmitted from mother to daughter offer advice on how to maneuver around a cruel mother-in-law. "Beloved daughter of mine; I will teach you how to be a daughter-in-law. When your mother-in-law returns from synagogue, bring her the golden chair." In several versions of this song, the daughter follows her



mother's advice to no avail. When the young woman is in labor, her mother-in-law refuses to send for a midwife or permit the daughter-in-law to take in fresh air. In another variant, the young woman, in labor, asks her father-in-law to go to synagogue to pray for her. He refuses, saying "*Got vil dikh nisht hobn af der velt.*"/ "God does not want you to live." The song ends with the girl's mother finding her daughter dying in childbirth.

ALLUSIONS TO RAPE

Margaritkelekh / Daisies

In the woods, by a stream
The daisies grow like little suns
With white rays.
Khavele goes there, quiet and dreamy,
Her braids unfastened,
Her blouse open at the neck, she sings.
When a boy approaches
Hair black like coal, eyes aflame,
He answers her song.

"What are you looking for out here,
Did you lose something?
What do you want to find in the grass?"
"I'm just looking for daisies", she blushes.
"Still looking? He asks. "And me,
I just found the prettiest one in the forest.
With braids and sapphire eyes, what eyes."

"No, let me go, I can't do this.
My mother says it's wrong.
She'll be so angry."
"What Mother, where is she.
There are just trees here."

"Do you like me?" "I like you."
"Are you ashamed?" "I am ashamed ."
Then love me, and be ashamed, and be silent.
And see how my black curls mix with your golden."

The sun in gone now, the boy—gone,
And Khavele still sits in the woods.
Looks off into the distance, murmuring the song....

This popular folksong is traditionally sung as a sweet romantic encounter. I had thought of it somewhat more darkly, as a sinister love song. Last year, I conducted a vocal master class and a young woman presented *Margaritkelekh* as a song about date rape. The song reflected her own experience being raped by someone she knew. The confusion, shame and loneliness of the victim in the song was clear to her and it has changed the song for me forever. (*The Yiddish text of Margaritkelekh* is at www.Lilith.org)

A USABLE PAST

Yiddish folk culture is often seen as a relic of a quaint world gone by. But as these songs show us, this culture connects us to a real and usable past. When we strip away our sentimental notions and look at the content of the songs, the complicated world that our families come from is revealed. In these songs we hear the clarion voices of our mothers' grandmothers. Their experiences and stories empower us to face our own lives as Jewish women.

We are all Brayne. We hear our neighbor's pain. We see the horrific consequences of systemic poverty on women around the world, how laws are used to limit women's autonomy. Against the historical odds, Yiddish culture equips us to act in the present. ■

Adrienne Cooper has shaped a generation of new Yiddish performance in concerts, recordings, theatrical works, writing and teaching, reframing Jewish women's experiences. Her newly released CD is "Enchanted: A New Generation of Yiddish Song." Sarah Mina Gordon, her daughter, teachers at Brooklyn Friends School and fronts the band Yiddish Princess.

ART: SHIFRA WHITEMAN, ON VERTER (WITHOUT WORDS), 2011 SHEET MUSIC: COURTESY OF THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE/ARBETER RING.

Pausing at the Doorpost

New Meaning for the Mezuzah

BY MARIAN NASH

ILLUSTRATION: LIANA FINCK

I walk my new husband, Jim, to the elevator and kiss him good-bye. The door closes and I whisper my prayer of thanks for him and for his return. I touch the *mezuzah* hung on the right side of our doorframe; I bring my fingers to my lips. To myself I say, Torah, and go into the kitchen for a glass of water.

The practice of hanging a mezuzah, which means doorpost in Hebrew, dates to biblical times. A mezuzah, the box or cylinder affixed to the doorpost, does not have any spiritual significance unless it contains a parchment scroll with the *Sh'ma*, the proclamation of God's oneness, and biblical verses. *Therefore, impress these words of Mine upon your heart … Inscribe them upon the doorposts of your homes and upon your gates … You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your home, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up… .*

I am most comfortable acknowledging the mezuzah when I am alone or with Jim. Visitors following me into the apartment may catch the swift movement of my hand reaching up, but I tend to hide the final act when my fingers go to my lips. I feel their curiosity at my back. I wish I weren't too self-conscious to turn to them and say, "I like how this leads me to contemplate how I will be in my home." But I am. The burn is still fresh in my mind from the time I was asked by one guest, "How is this any different than being an obsessive compulsive? What if you forget to kiss the mezuzah? Do you have to back track to make it right?"

I was embarrassed by the idea that I was being considered a Two Scoop, the term a friend of mine uses to describe certain religious people. It seems to him that when they "find" religion they open their heads and remove two scoops of their brains before closing them again. But I find myself to be my most rational when acknowledging the mezuzah, as it leads to the careful consideration of my actions after I cross the threshold.

While I have learned to put myself no longer in the line of judgment or ridicule or condescension (I talk about my Judaism

only with those who also have a religious practice), I shouldn't have been surprised. Only a few years before, I was the person who judged and looked down upon religion. I believed that it was used to instill fear and keep the masses controlled, especially after living in Utah, where it seemed as though the line between church and state was drawn in pencil and followed quickly behind with an eraser. After drinking from the waters of Torah, though, I began to appreciate that the building of a spiritual foundation was based precisely upon the tension inherent in free will. Many times Jim and I will be having a disagreement in the elevator going up to our apartment. I will be pit-bulling the topic, clamping my opinion and viewpoint down hard on Jim's every word and shaking it in the jaws of my righteousness. Reaching up to acknowledge the mezuzah on our doorway breaks the momentum. It gives me that split-second chance to lighten up and ask, Would I rather have some peace and quiet? The heated moment quickly cools, as I feel pressed to find a solution.

On occasion, I have needed to pause for quite some time outside our apartment before I could acknowledge the mezuzah and take responsibility for my actions. As it is our habit that Jim unlocks the door to the apartment and stands aside as I go in, he is obliged to stand behind me in the hall until I calm down. Fuming, and with my arms crossed, I struggle with the want to allow my temper to reign with the full awareness that that state of mind can not enter our apartment; I can not have a marriage, I cannot have a life that allows the lack of self-control, the lack of regard for Jim and our being together. Certainly, I feel stupid and childish when this happens, but I was born with a 0-90 in two seconds temper, and I know this is what working to manage it looks like. After a few moments, in the safety of Jim's love, patience, and care, I finally admit that my anger, as usual, has nothing to do with the person or situation I seem mad at, but my fear. Along with my temper, I have a Chicken Little quality that gets me riled up. Once I calm down, I can cross our threshold into a more honest moment.

May the words of Torah, Lord our God, be sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people. ... I impress the words of Torah on my heart to try to remember to be kind, forgiving, creative, and compassionate, though I usually forget by the time I am in the kitchen making breakfast—we don't have a mezuzah on every door frame, which would be found in a more Orthodox home.

In the years of study leading to my formal conversion, I did become intrigued by the Orthodox community. I thought once I converted I would have mezuzot throughout the apartment, following my desire to slip into the full rhythm of the Jewish calendar year, leaving the secular one behind. I wanted to wind myself up within each ritual: wake with morning blessings on my lips, go to shul and pray, be kosher, buy kosher, dine out kosher, light candles, light candles on time, buy white, wear white, spread the Shabbes table in white. Make kugel, eat kreplach, and, at a drop, know the difference between the two.

Instead, I was cautioned by stories of converts who were more observant than the families they marry into and the strain it caused. One well-intentioned convert I knew had her in-laws over for Shabbes dinner. As she walked around the table with a bowl of water and cup for everyone to participate in the ritual cleansing of the hands before a meal, her mother-in-law moaned, "Oh, no. This isn't the kind of Jew you are going to be." The porcelain bowl might as well have been shattered on the floor.

I also didn't want to be the butt of the old joke: A Jewish businessman warns his son against marrying a "shiksa." The son replies, "But she's converting to Judaism."

"It doesn't matter," the old man says. "A shiksa will cause problems." After the wedding, the father calls the son, who is in business with him, and asks why he is not at work.

"It's Shabbat," the son replies.

"But we always work on Saturday. It's our busiest day."

"I won't work anymore on Saturday. My wife wants us to go to shul on Shabbat."

"See," the father says. "I told you marrying a shiksa would cause problems."

For my union with Jim, and joining his family—none of whom observed more than the major holidays—I released myself from the attempt to restructure my life with the many rituals of Judaism. I knew it would be too much, too soon. When the *mikveh* waters dried in my hair, no longer a student of Judaism but a Jew; no longer single but married; no longer only a daughter but a daughter-in-law, all remarkably different states of being, I realized ritual could bind if not tied into my new life with grace. With my intention to create peace, I began to question: What good is my Judaism if it creates strife in my marriage or with my in-laws? Jim's family lived only blocks away, gathering long before I showed up. Why would I disrupt the flow, rather than see how I would fit into it?

What good is my Judaism if it creates strife in my marriage, or with my in-laws?

To retain a sense of grace, I decided that in the quiet act of prayer, with the acknowledgment of the mezuzah, I would absorb the religion through a sieve—a mesh intertwined with foresight, reflection, and personal experience. I would familiarize myself, thoughtfully, with the other rituals before I would feel compelled to practice them. Then, when I am 12 years into Judaism, the length of time in the life of a Jewish girl when she is considered an adult and responsible for her actions and the practice of daily rituals, I will become a Bat Mitzvah, "daughter of the commandment." Until then, I want to have what Jim and every other person who was born Jewish has: time to live within the ease of my choices, time to understand myself as a Jew. ■

This is an excerpt from Nash's work-in-progress, "The Morning of My Judaism: An Exploration of the Jewish Morning Prayers Through the Study of Native American Basketry."

REVIEWS

Happily Ever After

Role models for our daughters

One of the critical pieces of evidence **Peggy Orenstein** unearths in her new book, ***Cinderella Ate My Daughter: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the New Girlie-Girl Culture*** (Harper Collins; $25.99), is that girls need role models. They need "larger than life heroes, especially in the all-important realm of fantasy, where they spend so much of their free time." Orenstein, who has researched and written about girls for almost 20 years, spends the majority of her book trying to figure out which of our culture's role models are positive, which innocuous, and which downright harmful. She prefers women in capes to sexy avatars, Hannah Montana to Miley Cyrus, and gory, unedited versions of European fairy tales to preschool pageants. But ultimately, though she "refuses to believe that parents are helpless," she comes up empty. Yes, she ends the book with the vague advice that motherhood should somehow involve "staying close but not crowding them, standing firm in one's values while remaining flexible." But she leaves her reader unsettled. How can we compete with the army of marketers dedicated to grabbing our girls' attention, subliminally guiding them towards a scripted womanhood of empowered acquiescence?

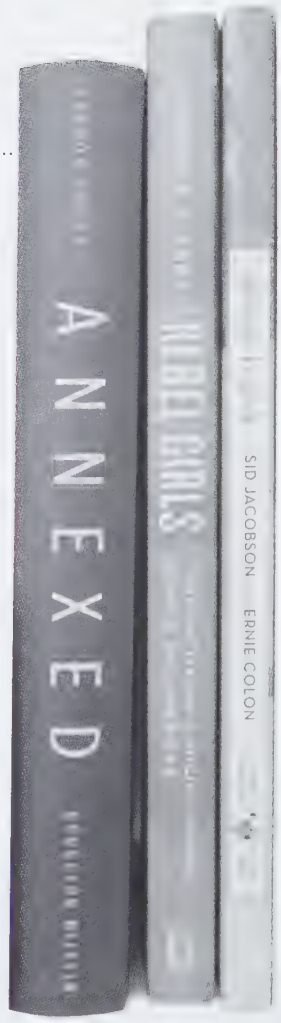
Cue **Jessica K. Taft**'s book, ***Rebel Girls: Youth Activism and Social Change Across the Americas*** (New York University Press, $22). This is not only a powerful sociological account of the making of a counter-culture girl identity—that of the socially active, community-minded girl; it is also a treasure-trove of data upon which I am going to build my newest venture: Rebel Girlz™*($55 per doll). Just imagine it! A whole line of dolls, American-Girl-esque (though more reasonably priced!) that are more than dolls, that are, in fact, role models for our girls—*the very role models Orenstein seeks*. Think of it! They might even inspire competitive lines—Rebel Barbie, Rebel Bratz...the possibilities are endless!

Taft, a professor of sociology, writes that one of the questions on the minds of girl activists is "how do we make rebellion enjoyable, effective, and irresistible?" Irresistible rebellion? I've got it covered! With the purchase of just one doll you can be sure that the next generation of girls will be civic-minded, passionate, and socially active. Choose a doll from each of Taft's five research locations—San Francisco, Vancouver, Mexico City, Caracas, Buenos Aires! Each doll comes with ripped jeans, a Che Guevera t-shirt and a nose ring (skateboard—$15.95, picket line—$9.99, and school-sit-in sleeping bag—$14.86 sold separately). Taft explains: "girls' empowerment is all too often focused on incorporating girls into the social order as it stands, rather than empowering them to make any meaningful changes to it." These dolls will not inherit the world as it is! They strive to make it better! They are *hopeful*! They are *activists*!

And, don't worry, they are also *girls*. Like the girls in Taft's study, a diverse and vibrant international community of teenage girls committed to global and social justice, these dolls "assert that girls are, indeed, more emotional, more caring, more sensitive. They then take these stereotypical characteristics into new social terrain...in short, they make some of the conventional understandings of girlhood rebellious." Mothers like Orenstein can be assuaged. How can we help our daughters find their own "happily-ever-afters?" With the purchase of just one Rebel Girlz™ doll, we will be well on our way.

*DISCLAIMER: Rebel Girlz™ does not guarantee that your daughter's values will reflect your own, nor do we guarantee against what your daughter may end up rebelling.

MAYA BERNSTEIN



Frankly, My Dear Diary

Anne of the Annex revisited

The legions of writers who appropriate in any way any part of the Anne Frank story (full disclosure: I am one of them) face a dilemma. As Anne retreats into history, we must find new ways to keep her memory alive. But often a cry of outrage goes up: Don't tamper with the Anne Frank we revere.

The moving novel ***Annexed*** (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, $17) by **Sharon Dogar** met with just such a response. Not only was Dogar toying with the story, critics cried, she was injecting sex into what some regard as a sacred text. The alarm was uncalled for. The novel does not insult or diminish Anne, but it does deepen our understanding of the seven people in hiding with her, and therefore of Anne herself.

Anne Frank was a precociously gifted young writer with a keen eye, a flair for the telling detail, and the determination

to rewrite and polish that turned her seemingly artless diary into a work of literature. But she was also a young girl with a young girl's limitations, prejudices, and quickness to judge. The characters we have come to know from her diary are not necessarily the people she was "trapped" with (Peter's word in this novel) for 25 months. Anne's sister, Margot, also kept a diary; had that survived, we might have a very different picture of life in the Secret Annex.

Another point of view is what Dogar gives us in this carefully researched, beautifully realized novel. Peter is no longer simply the object of Anne's early disdain and subsequent romantic attachment, but a flesh-and-blood teenage boy, who, like all teenage boys, thinks about sex. What is more normal, more honest, than a 16-year-old in a perilous situation fearing he will die without ever making love to a girl? He is also a boy on his way to manhood, wrestling with issues of courage and evil and what it means to be a Jew. "I think of…a time when it [being a Jew] was just one of the things I was…. Not the only thing."

Similarly, in this new telling, Peter's parents come alive not as the boorish couple who irk the quick-witted, irrepressible Anne, but as a loving, occasionally lighthearted husband and wife.

While *Annexed* probes more deeply into the characters who went into hiding, ***Anne Frank: The Anne Frank House Authorized Graphic Biography*** by **Sid Jacobson** and **Ernie Colon** (Hill and Wang, $16.95) casts a wider net. It seeks to tell, in illustrations and text, not only the story of Anne's entire life, but also Germany's descent into Nazism.

This book begins with the Frank family history before Anne was born, follows her to her death in Bergen-Belsen, and goes beyond, to the discovery of her diary by her father, Otto, the only one of the eight arrested in the Secret Annex who survived the concentration camps. Interspersed are "snapshots" that put Anne's personal experience in context, from the rise of Hitler through the horrors of the camps to the end of the war, the establishment of the Anne Frank House, and the worldwide recognition as a writer for which Anne so longed.

ELLEN FELDMAN

Post-Soviet Sisters

Tevye's daughters, modernized

The Cosmopolitans (Livingston Press, $17.95), a debut novel from **Nadia Kalman**, is an engaging look at the Russian immigrant experience in America through a complex family story—something of an anti-epic that chronicles how the Molochniks acculturate into the 21st century. The novel mirrors the structure of Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories, the gradual sacrifice of one daughter after another to the trials and scandals of modernity, much to the sadness and confusion of the seemingly unworldly parents. Kalman nods explicitly to her inspirations—the classical Russian and Russian-Jewish literary traditions that color her characters' logic and language—from the family's last name (Molochnik, Tevye's moniker in the Russian translation) to the father, Osip (for the poet Mandelshtam, quoted in the epigraph) and the mother, Stalina (for, well, the obvious). Under Kalman's deft touch, these unconcealed references highlight the Molochnik's cultural frame of reference, enriching our understanding of the family's context with warmth and wit.

Kalman exploits absurdist techniques and traditions with ease and subtlety, creating a fantastical yet utterly familiar world of Jewish domestic life. At the core of the novel are the love stories of three sisters, first-generation immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Milla, the oldest, marries into a wealthy Upper East Side Jewish family—and culture clash ensues. Her marriage a sham, she attempts to suppress her love for a woman. "Sex was an acquired taste," she tells herself. "Julie had made her acquire lesbianism, and Malcolm would help her un-acquire it." Yana is the idealist, her dilettante Marxism an endless source of amusement—and no little anxiety—for her post-Soviet parents. She explains to her suitor nonchalantly, "I took merengue for my Fascist movement requirement," when he asks her to dance. And Katya, the youngest, a pitiful shell of a girl, attempts, with a cocktail of narcotics, to silence the voice of Brezhnev that inexplicably—and literally—bubbles out of her throat at the slightest provocation. In her fantasies of punk rock stardom, "The crowd moshed, screaming her name. Not her regular name, Katya, but her punk name, Vonyuchinka, which meant 'the stinking one' in Russian. She opened her mouth to vomit down on them—*'Comrades, thanks to your most efficacious efforts, gross radish production has risen by an unheard-of and heroic percentage of six and three tenths…'*"

These women, each with a struggle and a poignant love story, are symbols of the ambivalences of Westernization, Americanization, acculturation—certainly. They alternate between alienating and clinging to their loving, yet often helpless, parents. But (and this is the heart of the novel's warmth and its success) the sisters are also full, complete characters—women with acerbic wit, intensity, and self-awareness.

In the growing sea of Russian Jewish immigrant fiction, Kalman gives depth, humor, and credence to a new kind of character. While many of her themes—the ambivalence of immigration, cross-generational miscommunication, a kind of magical realism—are familiar from other contemporary Russian Jewish writers like Gary Shteyngart or Ellen Litman, Kalman's fresh take gives these themes new life, as she brings depth, humor, and an intimate kind of grandeur to her genuinely lovable characters.

Each sister has her own love story. "Sex was an acquired taste," Milla tells herself.

SONIA ISARD

Ghosts in the Nursery

Remembrance of generations past

As I read two extraordinary new memoirs, ***At Home with Andre and Simone Weil***, by **Sylvie Weil**, translated by Benjamin Ivry (Northwestern University Press, $24.95) and ***An Exclusive Love***, by **Johanna Adorjan**, translated by Anthea Bell (W.

W. Norton & Company, $24.95), I kept thinking of the paper written years ago by the psychoanalyst Selma Fraiberg, titled "Ghosts in the Nursery." Fraiberg's thesis was that the spirit of uninvited guests from the parents' past hover in the newborn's bedroom, unconsciously affecting the personality development of the infant, as well as his or her later relationships. In these two books, the authors explore the long-term impact that the life—and death—of certain family members have on their own developing sense of self.

Sylvie Weil's book explores the consequences of growing up in the shadow of two unusual and outstanding progenitors: her aunt, Simone Weil, a famous French philosopher and mystic, and her father, Andre Weil, one of the greatest mathematicians of the twentieth century. Particularly complicated for Sylvie is the legacy of her famous aunt Simone, who left Judaism to become an ascetic Catholic, and who died at age 34 from ill health or perhaps from her self-starvation and refusal of medical intervention.

Johanna Adorjan's memoir is the personally imagined reconstruction of the last day in the lives of her urbane, sophisticated grandparents, survivors of the Holocaust, refugees from the Hungarian revolution and, finally, citizens of Denmark. On their last day, in October 1991, Adorjan's beloved grandparents Veronika (Vera) and Istvan (Pista) Adorjan, took their own lives in a suicide pact. Her grandfather was gravely ill, but her grandmother, who was in good health at the time, felt that she no longer wished to continue her life if her beloved husband was not by her side. Adorjan was 20 years old. This book is her poignant attempt to understand and come to terms with who they were and why they did what they did.

Each book is both moving and painful to read. Weil writes of the time when she was 16 and was awarded a French national academic award. General Charles DeGaulle shook her hand at the ceremony. Later that day, the front page of the evening newspaper was splashed with Sylvie's picture, with the headline identifying her only as the "Daughter of mathematician Maurice Weil (an annoying typo for my father)". The next edition of the paper displayed the same photo, with the headline changed to "Niece of the philosopher Simone Weil." Sylvie's mother's main response to the event was great annoyance that Sylvie had neglected to remove her jacket before the awards ceremony, and that therefore her new dress was not visible in the photograph.

Both Adorjan's and Weil's families were assimilated in practice and liberal in their Jewish leanings, and both writers seem to feel that they were left untutored and unmoored in their Jewish identities. Sylvie Weil was actually baptized, partially to fulfill her deceased aunt's request, and also to give her parents the assurance of safety that they felt came with a certificate of baptism. Johanna's grandfather wrote a memoir at age 77, with some of his observations about Passover, a holiday they didn't celebrate as a family. Adorjan's response is distress. "If I am to be perfectly honest, this makes me not only sad but even a little angry. For he stole a part of my identity as well, deprived me of an essential part of myself, bequeathed me a gap in my sense of self that seems like a mystery."

These memoirs offer intimate access into the lives of unusual people, and a sense of life in Europe between the two wars and of Jewish life in Europe following World War II. One of the unanswered questions inspired by these books is why women in particular might be drawn to give up so much for their God or for their relationships, even unto death.

NECHAMA LISS-LEVINSON

Sibling Rivalry and Revelry

Two anthologies tell all

As I begin this review, my younger sister is exactly three weeks from the due date for her second child, who will be the younger sister of my two-year-old niece. A few weeks ago she overcame her superstitions sufficiently to start preparing her daughter for the new arrival. "What happens when the baby comes to Marlow's house?" she asked her just last week. "Marlow open the door! Marlow says hi! Baby play with Marlow's books and toys!" Indeed, if this second generation of girls is anything like the first, books, toys, and imagination will turn them, too, from siblings into sisters. Most likely, as with my own sister, the road will not always be a smooth one. Two recently published anthologies, ***Sisters: An Anthology*** edited by **Jan Freeman**, **Emily Wojcik**, and **Deborah Bull** (Paris Press, $20.95) and ***Freud's Blind Spot***, edited by **Elisa Albert** (Free Press, $15) collectively gave me more than 60 poems, essays, and short stories through which to channel my own efforts to understand retroactively my and my sister's journeys.

Sisters, by design, is the more literary and wide-ranging of the two collections. Intended as a celebration of this magical familial bond, its multicultural stories and poems feature primarily positive portrayals. In contrast *Freud's Blind Spot* is intensely raw and always personal. These challenging, autobiographical pieces demonstrate, often painfully, how we are shaped by our siblings as much as by our parents (hence the title). Perhaps it is the addition of male characters and male points of view that gives much of this book an unsettled, even angry edge in contrast to the reassurance of *Sisters;* perhaps it is the consolidation of viewpoints and settings into 30- and 40-something writers mostly living in the U.S. today, digging deeply into their own lives. In *Sisters,* external circumstances—parents, marriage, death—may divide the sisters, but their relationships remain intact, valued by both no matter how damaged. In *Freud's Blind Spot*, the regrets outweigh the contentment.

To tell you what particularly shone from these thoughtfully assembled anthologies must reveal to you something about my relationship with my sister, because how else can one read them except personally? I was moved when centenarian Bessie Delany ended her recollections, "I just might get into Heaven. I may have to hang on to Sadie's heels, but I'll get there" (*Sisters*), or when Grace Paley remembers only at the end of her poem "I needed to talk to my sister" that she's been dead two years (*Sisters*), or when Miranda Beverly-Whittemore's sister climbed into the bathtub to help her through a very difficult labor (*Blind Spot*). Though neither of these books is a specifically Jewish anthology,

Escapism:
The native language of comics

How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less by **Sarah Glidden** (Vertigo, $24.99) is a travel memoir by a skeptical cartoonist. The author explains her project as follows:

"Before I came here, I read as many firsthand accounts of the Birthright experience as I could online. Many of the alumni wrote that from the moment they set foot in the land of Israel, they felt a real connection. A few even said that they felt like they were 'finally home.' To me, it's more like spotting a celebrity on a crowded street. Someone whose crazy life has been splashed all over the tabloid pages for years. And there they are… Right in front of you."

The book describes a gradual widening of Glidden's perspective, and a fracturing of her view as she realizes things in Israel are not as clear-cut as she thought. Through her journey, the narrator's prejudices are sometimes confirmed, but more often she realizes that the truth is diffuse. It's touching to watch her become less certain of herself as she peers into the lives of the different people she meets.

The pages of the book are divided into nine panels. For subtle changes in mood Glidden alters the grid a little—when, for instance, in the lower left corner of page 24, the narrator realizes that the long wall she's been gazing at from the tour bus window is "The" wall between Israel proper and the West Bank, the sudden expansion of her mind is articulated as a double-wide panel, containing an expanse of concrete.

The most moving parts of the book are when Glidden steps back from the narrative and treats us to something from her bright-eyed imagination: a courtroom scene inside the narrator's clamoring mind in which judge, lawyers and jurists are played by herself in different outfits; a confused war scene in which paratroopers ride T-Rexes; a sci-fi robot shooting at a knapsack; various absurd and poignant ghosts. Escapism is the native language of comics, and Glidden is most herself when escaping from her own story.

Evolution of a Crazy Artist by **Sophie Crumb** (Norton, $27.95) is less a story of the artist's search for self than hard evidence of it. Sophie is the daughter of two underground comics makers—her mother is Aline Kominsky Crumb, and her father is the legendary R. Crumb, regarded as the founder of the underground comix movement and author of a recent comics version of the book of Genesis. The three of them compiled this book together. In his forward, Sophie's father disarms the anti-snobs in us: "Naturally, Aline and I always thought that Sophie was an exceptionally gifted artist, but the main point of this compilation is not to show off her talent, but to track the development, the evolution, of a given human being through the medium of drawing, starting from very early childhood." Self-portraits abound, intimate and agonized, in this collection of sketches made by Sophie Crumb between the ages of two and 28.

Sophie's drawings are sometimes wonderful, but never pretty. The young cartoonist's work looks like what one of the little girls in the paintings of outsider artist Henry Darger might have drawn. The teenage Sophie discovers drugs, sex, and other ways of torturing herself, and runs off to circus school, away from her parents and the tug of her artistic talent. In her early twenties she runs farther, to New York, where she has some terrifying hard times. There's so much angst in her art, and not just the kind of caricaturist's angst that turns to joy on the page.

Still, we can tell from the pictures at the end of the book that Sophie has begun to find what she was looking for. She has settled down in France with a nice man and their baby. The drawings from this era are crafted by a wonderfully competent artist, comfortable in her own skin. Whether it was nature or nurture that made Sophie a compulsive artist her art certainly derives from her parents, and it seems that a loving family is what moves her to create.

Evolution of a Crazy Artist is dense with emotion and meaning, and you can get lost in the drawings. Still, I'd hesitate to look through it again. It's the paper trail of a girl's flight from herself, and the reader who sits thoughtfully with *Evolution of a Crazy Artist* will probably weep with vexation at the pointless suffering it documents. I can't wait till Sophie Crumb makes some more real comics.

LIANA FINCK

REPRINTED FROM SOPHIE CRUMB: EVOLUTION OF A CRAZY ARTIST BY SOPHIE CRUMB COPYRIGHT © 2011 BY SOPHIE CRUMB AND A. AND R. CRUMB. USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHER, W.W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.

more than one relationship was affected by one sibling's changing Jewish identity. Etgar Keret wrote hilariously, though poignantly about the insurmountable divisions his sister's turn to Ultra-Orthodoxy created (*Blind Spot*), and Faith Soloway questioned her sister Jill belatedly on why she found spiritual comfort in the Jewish identity that scarcely registered in their upbringing (*Blind Spot*). Whatever your own experiences, if you, like me, are looking for a framework to analyze your relationship with your sibling(s), then amongst this vast diversity of perspectives you will surely find your own favorite selections to locate your experiences within.

I finish writing this review in my sister's house, where I just put Marlow to bed. I told her, "Marlow, in another few weeks, you will never be alone again. You'll never have to go looking for a playmate. And like your *tante* you'll never remember life any other way."

By the time you read this, Marlow will be a big sister, with all of the responsibilities—joyous and burdensome—that implies. Will she beg her parents to "*Shlug*

da kleine," beat up the little one, as resentful older sister Tsipi Keller did (*Sisters*)? Or will she find that "a partner [is] absolutely essential" to her play, as Simone de Beauvoir did after the arrival of her little sister (*Sisters*)? "Sisterhood and brotherhood is a condition people have to work at," concludes Maya Angelou in one story's epigraph, which could serve for both anthologies. This captures the lesson I most hope I can teach Marlow: there's nothing unnatural about expending effort to preserve this most natural of relationships.

TAMMY HEPPS

Objects of Study

Examining our material and visual culture

What do we talk about when we talk about things? Three volumes published this year offer compelling evidence that the study of objects is undergoing something of a renaissance within Jewish studies. Recent scholarship has sought to replace the centrality of text and language with the material world of things and landscapes. For Jewish studies, this move away from text-based scholarship to thing-based study is quite momentous.

Jewish Dimensions in Modern Visual Culture (**Rose-Carol Washton Long, Matthew Baigel** and **Milly Heyd**, eds., New England UP, $55) is the most straightforwardly art-historical of these volumes, offering an enlightening set of essays about the various and often vexing ways in which Jewish artists participated in the broad currents of visual modernism. Moving from essays addressing the relation between Antisemitism and the writing of art history to individual figures such as Dadaist founder Tristan Tzara (ne Shmuel Rosenstock), the volume concludes with an essay describing how postwar architecture has been deeply influenced by the Shoah. One need only think of the international preeminence of such Jewish architects as Frank Gehry and Daniel Libeskind to get a sense of how thoroughly enmeshed architectural practice and Jewish practitioners have become in recent years.

Material Culture and Jewish Thought in America by **Ken Kolton-Fromm** (Indiana, $26.95) takes a relatively well-known cast of characters (Mordechai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heshel, Joseph Solovetchik and fiction writers such as Philip Roth and Cynthia Ozick) and reads them in a new light—actually, in a new "shadow," one cast by material objects. Thinking beyond a narrow definition of text, and the normative notion of the Jews as "the people of the book," this volume challenges readers to contemplate the tangible—and by now undeniable—changes wrought by American materialism on Jewish religious beliefs and practice. A simple example may be found in the plethora of Hanukkah-related *tchatchkes* one now sees in the neighborhood Walgreens, alongside the Halloween and Christmas displays. Koltun-Fromm's book strays out of the confines of "thought" per se into the domain of popular culture. He reads prose and fiction, as well as the covers of Lilith magazine, as evidence of how material objects shape Jewish identity in the United States, and how these objects are expressions of identity. The question of an American Jewish "material heritage" posed at the end of Koltun-Fromm's book points to the increasingly important role of the home in American Jewish life.

Ideas about home are at the center of another fascinating collection of essays, ***Jews at Home: The Domestication of Identity*** (Littman, $26.95). **Simon J. Bronner**'s finely edited volume moves from a general consideration of the difference between house and home *(bayit)* in Jewish cultures to site-specific meditations on the *sukkah*, the synagogue gift shop and more recent incarnations of public and private space on the Jewish blogosphere. An investigation of how the Crown Heights home of the Lubavitcher Rebbe was meticulously replicated as "Chabad houses" in locations such as Milan, Montreal and Melbourne offers a postmodern twist on the portability of holy space that has long characterized Jewish cultures—for example the ark in desert, or the sukkah as it has evolved in diasporic Jewish practice. The collection as a whole demonstrates how the reinvention of ritual is inevitably embedded in the material world, and as such is subject to the whims and vagaries of this ever-changing world.

Within the academy, this turn away from textuality and history to the more material dimensions of space and the physical world is signified in the shift from *Judaic* studies to *Jewish* studies, with the latter term signifying a domain of study reaching beyond the normative confines of religious institutions and traditional texts. Certainly the increasingly fragmented and ersatz yet dazzling creativity that constitutes the vibrant world of American Jewish practice—religious and secular alike—chafes against the confines of the text as a suitable container. But, the old question remains: Is it sustainable? What

kind of culture will this "recycling" of Jewish ritual—be it the *mikveh*, the *eruv* or the *siddur*—bring forth, and will it be recognizable as "Jewish"? Much of this imaginative work takes place on websites like *sabbathmanifesto.com* and The Jew and the Carrot. Even while this cultural turn towards the virtual world is firmly underway, it's nice to be reminded how much material things can matter too.

BARBARA MANN

Be Kind to Yourself

Caring for a chronically ill child

How do you learn to live with the ongoing medical, emotional and logistical demands of caring for a chronically ill child? **Naomi Levy**, author of ***Hope Will Find You: My Search for the Wisdom to Stop Waiting and Start Living*** (Harmony Books, $23), is a well-known Los Angeles-based rabbi whose happy family life received a shock to its system in July 2001, when she learned that her five-year old daughter, Noa, had a potentially fatal degenerative neurological disease. Although Noa's poor coordination and awkward movement patterns had since her toddlerhood signaled something was amiss, Levy and her husband, Rob, were nonetheless unprepared for a disease with such a harsh prognosis. And, as often happens, the spouses responded in distinct—and at times discordant—ways. While Rob went into overdrive, keeping fear and dread at bay by staying as active as possible at work and at home, Levy felt emotionally drained, going through the days on auto-pilot. By necessity, Noa was forced to mature quickly in the course of endless doctor visits, medical tests and physical therapy sessions.

Disagreements among Noa's doctors about diagnosis and treatment were further cause for confusion. (In fact, the doctors never pinned down a specific diagnosis, though they ultimately concluded that the disease probably would not prove fatal.) Determined to put as much energy as possible into helping Noa, but consumed by anxiety, Levy became paralyzed with indecision about how to move forward with her own life. Only gradually did she begin to emerge from her psychological fog by remembering how she coped with past setbacks, including the murder of her father when she was a teenager. She was further aided by weekly Talmud study sessions with a colleague and by the examples of former congregants who had coped under the direst circumstances (most memorably, a homeless man dying of AIDS who nonetheless embarked on a private Torah tutorial with Levy).

Levy frames these reflections and insights as a series of effective—and affecting—mini-sermons and pep talks that blend Jewish wisdom with practical advice. By the book's end, Noa has successfully celebrated her bat mitzvah and is thriving at a school for children with special needs. Levy herself has reclaimed a sense of mission and acted on her desire to found a progressive community-based congregation. But it is Noa, ultimately, who manages to teach others how to cope by creating (and living by) her own list of "Rules for Living a Rich Life." They may be simple and to the point—examples include "Be Adventurous," "Be Kind to Yourself," "Make Mistakes" and "Laugh"—but as mantras for getting through one tough day at a time, they are hard to beat.

Where Levy's book is inspirational, ***And Twice the Marrow of Her Bones: A Mother's Memoir*** by **Susan Petersen Avitzour** (ZmanMa $16.95) reads more like emotional catharsis. Avitzour's daughter Timora was 12 when she started to complain of fatigue and unusual pains in her legs—the first symptoms of the rare leukemia that eventually claimed her life eight years later, despite numerous treatments and all-too-brief periods of remission.

Throughout her daughter's ordeal and in the years after Timora's death in 2001, Avitzour produced a detailed blog about the struggles her daughter faced, and the grief with which the family was left (she has six other children), and those entries form the basis of her densely detailed account. Like Levy, Avitzour initially tried to deny the severity of her daughter's illness, and at times alternated between a sense of numbness and periods of complete immersion in helping her daughter. Both also drew comfort from Jewish wisdom—interestingly, they each chose to preface every chapter with aphoristic Yiddish proverbs or quotes from the Bible—even while questioning God's purpose (or lack thereof) in causing the suffering of children. While the authors can provide no easy answers—for themselves, or for others—their stories demonstrate that meaning can emerge just from the telling of a story.

DIANE COLE

Now Read These Poems

As a poet and a mother to a young child, I'm always looking to read the works of other "poet-moms." So I was thrilled to delve into **Erika Meitner**'s second book, ***Ideal Cities*** (Harper Perennial, $13.99), a National Poetry Series winner. The book was written when Meitner's son was an infant, and the poems have that dreamy, awestruck feel. In "The Upstairs Notebook," Meitner writes about how she balances poem-making with baby care. She has two writing notebooks, one upstairs and one downstairs, so that she can jot down a line or two wherever she is. Meitner writes with characteristic tenderness: "In my downstairs notebook I also try / to write about the way it feels to walk / with my son strapped to my body, / his wet mouth suctioned to the space / between my breasts."

In the second half of the book, Meitner transitions into a group of poems about her grandmother, a Holocaust survivor. Her grandmother is dying when Meitner is pregnant with her son, and the poet beautifully weaves together these two subjects. She writes, "my grandmother / is not nearly gone. / She is rising like a deer / from the meadow. She is dancing with a baby / in her arms" (from "North Country Canzone"). In Meitner's elegy to her grandmother ("Elegy with Construction Sounds, Water, Fish"), she discusses her grandmother's first language, and how it will live on after death:

> … and there is Yiddish—
> my grandmother's Galicianer accent,
> shorthand for a thumping resilient
> nameless thing that refuses to leave us,
> refuses to sing."

Becka Mara McKay is a poet and a Hebrew translator, and her book ***A Meteorologist in the Promised Land*** (Shearsman Books, $15) is a testament to this work. The book showcases her ability to play with language, turn it upside down and inside out. In "Birds in April" McKay writes, "the tongues I've learned don't offer word— / for-word translation. They are glass, *aim and / fire*." Her poems resist easy summing-up, but they leave a reader brimming with images, and words that heat and chill the bones. Consider "Excision Sonnets," her poems about a miscarriage, whose fragmented look and feel mirror the experience of losing a baby:

I'd rather
avoid *:hemorrhage, curettage, trace*
tissue, necessary. I
explain the body's strange
persistence, border salt,
unvoiced I will not lie
God arrange
conception *not your fault.*

Not all of the poems are this extreme in their form or language. Many sing quite melodically. Her poem "T'philot (Prayers: Jerusalem, summer)," a short series of images, contains one of the most sensual and memorable lines from the book. McKay writes, "the boy took my breast / in his mouth. *Do you love it*, / he asked. Hebrew / has no word for like." McKay the translator challenges the reader to see what lies beyond the words we utter. This is, in fact, what all poems aim to do: to look beneath the surface of things, to tell the truth but tell it slant.

In my own poetry I tend to stay focused on the same subject matter for quite some time before moving on to new subjects. While reading ***Fair Creatures of an Hour*** (Loonfeather Press, $12.95), a third book of poems from **Lynn Levin**, I was struck by this poet's breadth. There are love poems and existential meanderings on life and death, poems with Jewish themes, gardening poems, a poem about a drugstore clerk, a social worker… the list goes on. Levin's voice also shifts, at times smart and intellectual, other times soulful and dreamy. In one poem she scrutinizes the idea of the "immortal soul," and in the next offers a line like "I couldn't tell my breath / from the new-mown grass" (in "Helium").

The book seems to go deeper into Levin's heart as it progresses, including a dramatic, vivid and cerie poem about her mother's cancer, "Nuclear Scan of the Crab Nebula." She remarks on the distance she has always felt from her mother, but when they are together in that radiologist's office she has a flash of memory from childhood of her mother's loving embrace: "she sometimes / let me rest my sad head / on her big bra'd chest / and held me." At the end of the poem, when her mother is about to be injected, Levin writes,

I'll just say that when the radiologist
took his long needle and shot
the isotopes into her breast
cancer I felt that old blue
windex-sting in my eyes,
and Mom just lay there
like a good patient, but I cried.

I love Levin's simplicity here—a clear and precise description of what happened, an evocative image grounded in daily life, and a moment of passion at the end.

WENDY WISNER

Home on the Page

Location, location, location

Where We Find Ourselves: Jewish Women around the World Write about Home edited by **Miriam Ben-Yoseph** and **Deborah Nodler Rosen** (SUNY Press, $19.95) is a powerful collection of stories, poems, and essays.

All of the various contributors grapple with the definition: "Home is a place where you can sleep all night without having to worry about Cossacks at the door," is how Diana Anhalt puts it, paraphrasing her Russian grandmother; "a place you go to (deep in the night) when you're alone and nothing is familiar" is from Viva Hammer, an Australian writer transplanted to the U.S.; "One's own interior place where everything is possible and where life cannot be thwarted" is the formulation by Angelina Muniz-Huberman, a Crypto-Jew raised in Mexico City.

What emerges is the notion of home as haven, the place or activity one returns to again and again, whether in imagination or fact, for safety, peace, and possibility. Jewish ritual, orthodox or improvised, plays a large part in these home-makings: for one writer, Shabbat becomes her "ancestral haven" or "supreme Home," while for another "a little house on the margin of days / with no Sabbath and no Seder" is a more than adequate abode of "peace and the smell a child might describe." The Jewish homeland of Israel is also invoked, though often in a questioning tone. As one writer puts it, "Homeland? Deceit. Illusion."

Ben-Yoseph and Nodler have organized their book into four intertwined sections: "Displacement and Exile," "Place and Memory," "Language and Creativity" and "Family and Tradition." Exile and displacement are the common threads, for any 21st century Jewish woman writes against the background of the disasters of the 19th and 20th centuries. Family and traditions enter into all meditations on home, as do place and memory. The role of language and creativity may be less obvious, though it emerges eloquently: Ellen Cassedy writes in poignant detail of her rediscovery of Yiddish, "the linguistic homeland of a people without a home"; Tracy Koretsky bravely recounts how she is "finding God" in visual art rather than in a narrow orthodoxy.

All the senses are evoked as these writers call up the qualities that constitute home, the places where our embodied spirits take root. Not surprisingly, food figures centrally. Challah and honey, falafel and hummus, pot roast, fish curry, halvah, charoset, strawberry soda—scents and flavors waft through these pages. In "If Only I'd Been Born a Kosher Chicken," performance artist Jyl Lynn Felman brilliantly plays with stereotypes of the Jewish mother to explore the dilemma of the *vilde chayes*, the rebellious daughter "cast out" of home with "no place to go."

The tension between rootedness and wandering is at the book's heart, with many contributors echoing Iranian writer Farideh Dayanim Goldin's view that "a Jewish home" is always, essentially, "ephemeral." For her, the sukkah, the Jewish people's "temporary home for a week" is the reminder and metaphor for our existential homelessness. S.E. Gilman

puts it even more directly: "We wander, and the shelter is the Sukkot bower that sun will wither and at night we see black space and faraway empty stars."

Where We Find Ourselves offers significant voices that create a powerful chorus. We discover that Jewish women are indeed both at home (and homeless) throughout the world. True to the book's title, readers will find themselves in these pages, which offer a homecoming of their own.

JOYCE ZONANA

Our Reviewers

MAYA BERNSTEIN is Director of Education for UpStart, supporting Jewish social entrepreneurs in the Bay Area. She writes on motherhood for The Lilith Blog.

DIANE COLE is the author of the memoir *After Great Pain: A New Life Emerges*, and is the book columnist for the journal Psychotherapy Networker.

ELLEN FELDMAN is the author of *Scottsboro*; *The Boy Who Loved Anne Frank*; and *Lucy*. Her novel *Next To Love* will be published in August.

LIANA FINCK is making a graphic novel about the Bintel Brief. She writes a graphic blog for the online magazine Tablet. Her graphic blog "The Shul Detective" first appeared on The Lilith Blog.

TAMMY HEPPS is a web technologist living in New York City.

SONIA ISARD is assistant editor at Lilith. She studied Russian and Yiddish history and literature at the University of Michigan and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

NECHAMA LISS-LEVINSON is a psychologist and author of *When a Grandparent Dies: A Kid's Own Remembering Workbook for Dealing with Shiva and the Year Beyond*. She received the Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award for her children's book *When the Hurricane Came to New Orleans*.

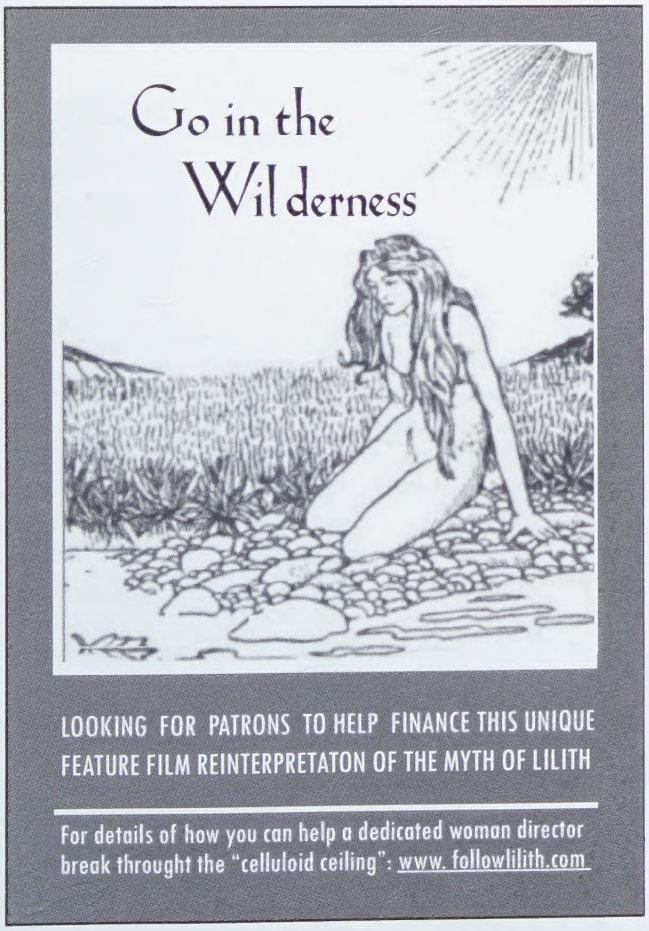
BARBARA MANN is Associate Professor of Hebrew Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary and the author of *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space*.

WENDY WISNER is the author of *Epicenter*, a book of poems; her poetry has appeared in The Spoon River Review, The Bellevue Literary Review, Verse Daily, and elsewhere.

JOYCE ZONANA is the author of *Dream Homes: From Cairo to Katrina, an Exile's Journey*. She teaches writing and literature at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

CORRECTION:

A pull-quote accompanying the winter review of Haya Molnar's book *Under a Red Sky: Memoir of a Childhood in Communist Romania* should have read "I wish the world would stop hating Jews because I'm still the same person I was before I knew I was Jewish." In an unfortunate typo, the pull-quote that ran replaced the word "hating" with "having."


Go in the Wilderness
LOOKING FOR PATRONS TO HELP FINANCE THIS UNIQUE FEATURE FILM REINTERPRETATON OF THE MYTH OF LILITH
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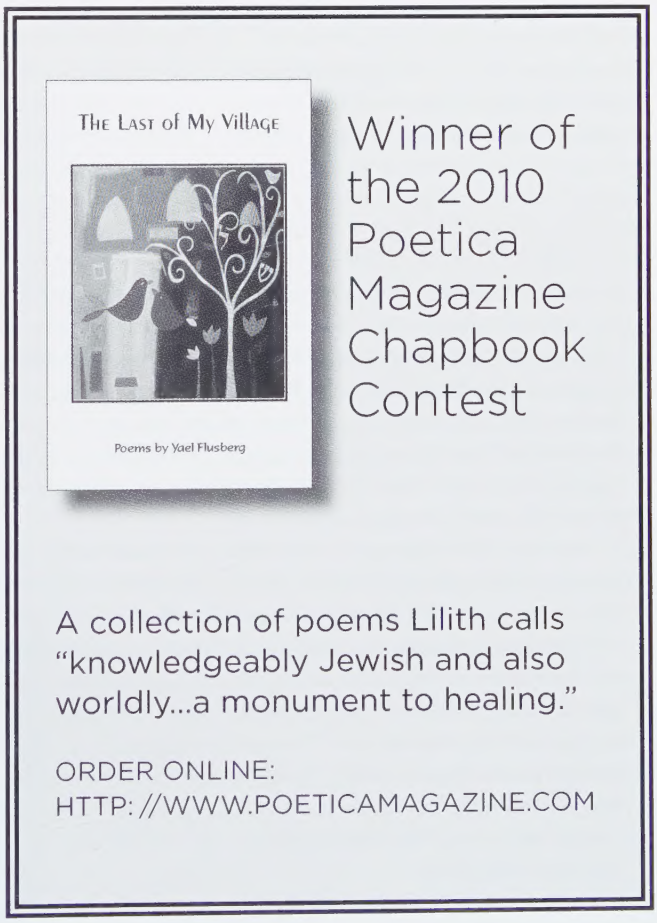
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HAPPENING

Our Bodies...in Hebrew & Arabic

Women and Their Bodies set out in 2005 to develop *Our Bodies, Ourselves* in Hebrew (*Nashim Le'Gufan*) and Arabic (*Al Mara wa Kayanaha*). WTB runs workshops for girls and women and for health care professionals, and advocates with policymakers on issues affecting women's health in Israel. More than 350 volunteers helped prepare the health guides, slated for publication in June 2011. WTB has also established an online information center with materials in Hebrew and Arabic that makes it easy for women and girls to access information privately and anonymously. *wtb.org.il*

Beyond Facebook—Dot Diva Draws Girls to Computer Science

A new website with a name meant to evoke the glitzy aspects of computer science wants to increase the number of college-bound girls drawn to this field. One of the developers of this site is the National Center for Women & Information Technology. Dot Diva features "Kate and Ali"—a web series about two young Dot Divas working in a hip startup gaming company; a virtual meet-and-greet with real-life Dot Divas working in robot design, healthcare, digital media, and fashion; and resources for educators, computer science professionals and parents. *dotdiva.org*

The Wake-Up Call

"In the chaos of conflict and disaster, women and girls are at even greater risk as their bodies and spirits become the forgotten front line. Sexual violence is not just a by-product of war; it is also a strategy of combat used to terrorize and humiliate." An interactive multimedia campaign from the International Rescue Committee offers examples of women and men who are working each day for a world where a girl can go to school, where a woman is empowered to choose who and when she will marry, and where gender is not an obstacle to reaching one's full potential. *wakeup.theirc.org*

Seder for a Better World

"Long before anyone dreamed of a feminist seder, a peace seder, sustainable food or ecumenical seders, the Workmen's Circle celebrated Passover advocating its cultural/political causes in a communal gathering of progressive Jews. In 1933, thirty Workmen's Circle students and their families gathered in Crown Heights celebrating Passover in Yiddish poetry, song

Seeing Gertrude Stein

Here's the first major museum show about the fascinating visual legacy and life of Gertrude Stein (1874–1946). She had multiple identities as a literary pioneer, transatlantic modernist, Jewish-American expatriate, American celebrity, art collector, and muse to artists of several generations. The exhibition also features Alice B. Toklas (1877–1967), Stein's life-long partner, and explores the aesthetics of dress, home décor, entertainment, and food that the two women created together. Curated by Wanda M. Corn and Tirza Latimer, the exhibit is at the Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco May 12–September 6, 2011, and the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington DC, October 14, 2011–January 22, 2012.

This exhibition does not repeat what is well known about Stein's years as a salonière and collector of Picasso and Matisse in the years before World War I. Instead, it focuses on Stein from 1915–46, when she became recognized as a major writer, collected the works of the Neo-Romantics, and formed a new international circle of young friends she called her second family. The show, "Seeing Gertrude Stein: Five Stories," will be on view at the CJM at the same time as "The Steins Collect: Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian Avant-Garde," is up at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (May 21–September 6, 2011). "The Steins Collect" will travel to Paris and then New York after its SFMOMA premiere. *thecjm.org*

CECIL BEATON, GERTRUDE STEIN, 1937, COURTESY OF THE CECIL BEATON STUDIO ARCHIVE AT SOTHEBY'S.

and social justice debate. And it's been going on ever since." So writes Adrienne Cooper in her introduction to this *Activist's Hagodeh. circle.org*

Hollaback!

Sexual harassment is a gateway crime that creates a cultural environment that tolerates gender-based violence. There exists a legal framework to address sexual harassment and abuse in the home and at work, but when it comes to the streets—all bets are off. This gap isn't because street harassment hurts any less, it's because there hasn't been a solution. Find out about a growing international movement dedicated to ending street harassment using mobile technology, apps and maps, surveys and blogs, in a new frontier for women's rights. *ihollaback.org*

Cooks & Books

Many things divide Jews, but good food always seems to bring them together. Exploring this delicious topic, writer Ruth Andrew Ellenson (editor of *The Modern Jewish Girl's Guide to Guilt)* is working with the Jewish Book Council to collect recipes and their stories from Jewish tables across the country. For this compendium—part cookbook, part history and part essays—send your recipes and the stories behind them by May 1, 2011 to *Jewish Book Council Food Project, 520 Eighth Ave, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10018* or *food@jewishbooks.org*.

Walk About Love Festival

Over the course of 100 days, through June 2011, participants in this third annual event will hike through 620 miles of Israel's diverse landscape of deserts, forests, rivers, lakes, beaches and mountains, meeting local residents along the way. Walkers and volunteers of all ages and backgrounds can join this nonpolitical, peace-inspired eco-friendly festival for short periods of time as well. *walkaboutlove.org.il*

Sarah Bernhardt—in Your Nabe

The most famous actress of the 19th century could be coming soon to a venue near you, in a one-woman musical created and performed by Carol Dunitz. Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923), a French Jew, reached legendary heights in Europe in the 1860s and 1870s, and toured the U. S., Canada, Brazil, Australia, and Russia. The world's first superstar, she was the first woman to star in a full-length silent film, "Queen Elizabeth" (1912). Sarah Bernhardt's maternal grandparents were Orthodox Jews from the Netherlands, and her mother was a Jewish courtesan in Paris. It was said that Sarah Bernhardt (pictured here) never allowed anti-Semitic remarks to be made in her presence. During the hysteria of the Dreyfus Affair she courageously took a pro-Dreyfus stand, encouraging Emile Zola to write the pamphlet that proclaimed Alfred Dreyfus' innocence. Antisemitic attacks became more common once she declared herself a supporter of Dreyfus. However, her remarkable talent tended to neutralize the prejudice against her. While she was not religiously observant, she always claimed, "I am a daughter of the great Jewish race." *bernhardtonbroadway.com*

The Importance of Being Auntie

Total appreciation for the more than 50% of women who treasure the children in their lives but are not mothers! Long distance aunts, knitting aunts, aunts in Oregon, and all kinds of other kid-friendly women, aunts-by-relation and aunts-by-choice can find each other, share their stories, ask for advice, blog, brag, get ideas for activities and gifts on Melanie Notkin's new website. *savvyaunts.com*

Lilith Spring 2011 Online Auction

will open on Monday, May 9 and close on Sunday, May 22. Don't miss out on this wonderful fundraiser—and friend-raiser—for your favorite magazine. Sign up now at Lilith.org for advance news of auction items. You can participate by bidding, by telling your friends, and by donating a special item or experience. Our last auction featured tea in a private Jerusalem garden, a week in San Miguel de Allende, art, ritual objects, and exclusive-to-Lilith experiences. *biddingforgood.com/lilithmagazine*

Meet Lilith in Brooklyn

Join us at the Brooklyn Book Festival on September 18, 2011, to greet Lilith authors, editors and readers. This mammoth festival unites authors, book lovers, bookstores, literary organizations, and publishers from around the country in a celebration of books and ideas. *brooklynbookfestival.org*

PHOTO: WWW.WALKABOUTLOVE.ORG.IL

For events and projects taking place between issues of Lilith, follow Lilith on Facebook and Twitter, check out *Lilith.org*, *and sign up for Lilith's free e-mail newsletter.* Send suggestions for this section to *info@Lilith.org*.

—compiled by Naomi Danis

THE SOLACE OF MAIL-ORDER BEADS

BY ROKHL KAFRISSEN

THREE YEARS AFTER MY MOTHER'S DEATH, my small New York City apartment is crammed full of her jewels. Enough jewelry to stock a 47th Street showroom. Enough to give away to friends, donate to shelters for homeless women and/or sell a good part of and still have a different accessory for every day of the year. Three years later, I've neither donated, sold nor even worn much of it.

After a parent dies we expect a period of emptiness, a grappling with what is suddenly gone. What no one tells us is that from death we are suddenly heavy with stuff, pregnant with a thousand-and-one inherited possessions for most of which we have neither use nor place. Whether I was going to keep it or part with it, I had to stop treating my mom's jewelry like a museum piece.

So this year I decided that in the month leading up to her birthday in November, I would wear one piece of her jewelry every day, each selection documented on a Tumblr photo blog. The blog would challenge me to explore her collection, to decide what I loved and what I could part with, and maybe even help me start thinking of it as my own.

In the last years of her life, jewelry became my mom's solace and her creative outlet. She learned how to make all types of beaded jewelry while brutal cycles of chemo and radiation, as vicious as the cancers they purported to be fighting, made it harder and harder for her to leave her bed. In the months before she died, she was even working through a correspondence course from the Gemological Institute of America to becoming certified in pearl evaluation and grading.

But when she had no energy or focus for beading and reading, there was the 24-hour jewelry bazaar via shopping channels like HSN and QVC. Tantalizingly small envelopes showed up at her door at least once or twice a week. If my mom was a prisoner of her bed, then the yellow mailers from her friends at QVC were her Red Cross packages.

Connected to the arrival of each new package was a little ritual we enacted together. While hanging out in her bedroom, mom would go to one of her many exquisitely organized boxes of jewelry. "Come here, I want to show you something." I would look over, and sigh, quietly, as she took out a necklace or ring. "This is Swiss blue topaz" she would say. Or, "This is chrysolite." Or prasolite or tanzanite or some other gem invented by a swashbuckling team of HSN affiliated marketer-geologists. My mom was in love with her clusters of exotic gems while I ached for the simplicity of a single, perfectly cut ruby or a sapphire.

The yellow mailers, with the prasolite or tanzanite, from her friends at QVC were her Red Cross packages.

"Do you like it?" This was always the tricky part. I didn't like it. I didn't like them. I didn't like the gaudy gems with funny, newfangled names. I didn't like that my mom was spending so much money on jewelry.

"It's pretty," I would say, "for you..."

"Oh, you think it's too old lady-ish?"

"No... it's just more your style. Are you giving it to me?"

Then she'd smile, mock chastisingly. "No, not right now. But it will be yours some day."

Most of all, I hated this, the casual reminder that she was dying and that, sooner rather than later, all I would have would be her beloved collection of high-tech baubles. So she would lovingly tell me about each piece, the name, origin, where she got it from. And I would smile and pretend to be listening until, satisfied, she put that night's ring or necklace back in its home. I just wanted to go back to snuggling in front of Animal Planet and to pretend that nothing would ever change.

Today it's just me and hundreds of pieces of jewelry sparkling mutely in their velvet boxes, still in the order in which my mom last arranged them. I have no idea which is the chrysolite and which is the prasolite. If I could go back, I would pay attention to every detail. ■

Rokhl Kafrissen is a writer in New York City. She is working on her first book, *The Myth of the Yiddish Atlantis: Toward a Theory of Dynamic Yiddishkayt.*